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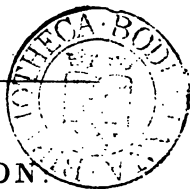
A COURSE OF  
**SIX LECTURES,**  

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**PREACHED AT**  
**CHRIST CHURCH, PARADISE ROW,**  
**CHELSEA,**  
*DURING LENT, 1844,*

BY  
CLERGYMEN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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ANY profit that may arise from the publication of the accompanying volume of Lectures will, through the kindness and liberality of the highly esteemed Clergymen by whom they were preached, be devoted to the National and Infant Schools of the District.

I cannot forbear availing myself of the present opportunity of expressing my thanks to those Brethren in the Ministry, who so kindly consented to take a part in the Course of Lectures which is now given to the public, and of adding the conviction that their labors have not been in vain.

W. H. HOWARD,

*Incumbent of Christ Church, Chelsea.*

June, 1844.





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# LECTURE I.

BY THE

REV. D. MOORE, M.A.

*Minister of Christ Chapel, St. John's Wood.*

#### **NOTE.**

It will be obvious on the most cursory perusal of the following Sermon, that it bears less on the subject announced as its title, than on the practical development and application of the text on which it is founded. Of this the only explanation to be given is, that the Sermon, though deemed sufficiently relevant to the general subject of Religious Indifference, by the excellent Minister who instituted these Lectures, was not originally intended by the writer for this work, nor for any work, but was merely a plain exposition of an important Scripture, addressed to his own people.

## RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE,

ITS CHARACTER, DANGER, &c.

---

LUKE, xi. 23.

*“ He that is not with me is against me : and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.”*

ALTHOUGH there never was a religion which could boast of fewer of the external appliances of human authority and power than the religion of the gospel, yet never was there one which claimed to exercise a more implicit and undivided sway over the hearts, and lives, and consciences of its followers. Other religions have been content to make an alliance with systems already in existence ; to soften down the prejudices of mankind by shewing them that they had the elements of truth already, which it was the design of the new theology to develope and complete ; so that Mahomet had

no objection to admit Moses to a prophetic rivalry with himself, whilst any gods, and all gods, might find a recognition of their claims in that indiscriminate and rabble-rout of deities which garnished the walls of the Pantheon.

But the religion of the Galilean fishermen spurned all compromise ; a partial interest in our affections it would not accept ; the partial truth of other systems it would not allow ; its bold and distinctive principle was, that there was truth nowhere, there was safety nowhere, there was happiness nowhere, but in the entire, uncompromising, exclusive acceptance of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Nay, it was not enough that men forsook the worship which they had been taught to revere, that they should shiver their idols into fragments, and walk over the dust of their fallen shrines ; if they would only give to the new religion a nominal, heartless, inactive adhesion, they were still to be deemed its foes. Empty encomiums on the moral beauty of its precepts, angry declamation against existing fallacies, the adoption of the costume and the name of those who fought beneath the gospel banners, were proofs of faithfulness which might suffice for other religions, but which would not suffice for Christianity. This was a work in which all

.

must co-operate, a warfare in which all must serve: the idle man was a faithless man, to sleep was to betray; and by how much the religion lacked the adventitious aids of wealth, and patronage, and power, by so much did it require the steady, untiring, and devoted faithfulness of all who ranged themselves on the side of holiness and truth. Were our enemies either few or feeble, its ambassadors seem to say, there might be some excuse for indolence, but they are neither: the world hates us, the powers of darkness are leagued against us, spiritual wickedness frowns upon us from its lofty and unhallowed heights; and therefore we may truly say, "he that is not with us is against us: and he that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad."

Before proceeding to illustrate, from these words, the dangers of that religious indifference on which I am this evening invited to address you, I will say a word or two on the circumstances which led to this remarkable declaration on the part of our blessed Lord. Our Lord had just performed a miracle on a man possessed of an evil spirit, and some of the unbelieving by-standers, unable to deny the fact of this miraculous cure, resolved to take away the merit of it, by referring it to the agency of

Satan. Our Lord condescends to refute these wretched reasoners by their own arguments. Let us suppose, he seems to say, for an instant, the truth of your blasphemous hypothesis, that I am an accomplice of the great enemy of souls ; you know he is a subtle being, one not very likely to damage the interests of his kingdom by the shallowness of his policy, and that the only delight of which his apostate nature is capable, is the fiendish satisfaction of protracting human misery : now do you think it likely that he would send his accomplices to remove the very suffering which he was labouring to perpetuate ? Would he allow his emissaries to undo to-morrow what himself had only achieved to-day ? or, supposing he did not allow it, could his kingdom be maintained in the midst of such internal divisions, or would any progress be made where two forces were pulling in such opposite directions ? Away then with such imputations, not more blasphemous than they are absurd : the only rational explanation of the miracle which you have just witnessed is, that He who ejects the evil spirit is more powerful than he who sends it ; that if there be a strong man to inflict misery on the human race, there is One stronger than the strong to *take it away*. I know, indeed, how the great

adversary can take possession of a soul as yet not occupied with the grace of God ; and there, as in a palace, Satan thinks he shall keep his goods in peace. But One stronger than the strong is come to put "this same confident boasting" to the test, He shall take from him the armour in which he trusted, He shall rescue the captive from Satan's ensnaring power, till having finally expelled the evil spirit from the heart, He shall divide among his joyous and triumphant followers the spoil of a ransomed soul.

Learn then, that the great end of my miracles, the true tendency of my doctrine, and the real triumph of my gospel, is the complete and final overthrow of the author of human misery ; and therefore all who believe those doctrines or embrace that gospel must make common cause with me against their spiritual adversary ; all hearts must be possessed either by him or by me ; there is not, and cannot be, such a thing as neutral ground. If I occupy a soul at all, I must be a light in it, and must shine ; I must be a seed in it, and must grow ; I must be a vital principle, and must work—without activity you are without me—it is useless to seek the living among the dead. Dead souls, idle souls, careless and inconsiderate souls, are all Satan's



palaces, where he keeps his goods in peace. He only asks to find a swept and garnished house, and he will instantly take other spirits more wicked than himself to tenant it. Mine are the active souls, the living souls, souls concerned for my honour, devoted to my person, engaged in my work, souls that on earth will promote my triumphs, souls that in heaven shall share my throne.

Neutrality, then, between me and Satan, there is none ; our kingdoms touch, a mathematical line is all that separates our territories, you may choose you this day on which side you will stand, or whose cause you will espouse ; but I propound it as a fixed, and necessary, and unalterable truth, that in this mighty controversy, "he that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

Our reason for directing your attention thus minutely to the circumstances in connection with which our Lord uttered the words in our text, is, that apart from those circumstances, they appear to be at variance with a sentiment attributed to him in the 9th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark, where in the 40th verse we read that our Lord said to his disciples, "for he that is not against us is on our part," *whilst* here he says, "he that is not with us is

against us." If, however, you will read the whole passage in St. Mark, you will find that the circumstances are quite different from those that are brought under our notice to-day; that the controversy there referred to, is an allowed and harmless difference between Christian and Christian, and not, as here, a struggle between the contending powers of light and darkness. It would lead us to too wide a digression to go into this second case minutely, but we may refer to the circumstances, in general terms, thus: a certain person, not ostensibly connected with the apostolic band, had, by the power of Christ, and in the name of Christ, wrought a miraculous cure, for which the disciples took upon themselves to reprove him. But our Lord censured them for this indiscreet zeal, rightly arguing, the man who by a reverent use of my name, and by his lively faith in my almighty power, shews that he would not be against us, ought for this very exercise of his faith to be considered as on our part.

Hence it appears, that the great principle of our text, namely, that religious activity and religious decision are the tests of our being on the Lord's side, remains in all its simplicity and force: and, therefore, that in the mighty struggle which is now going on between the armies

of heaven and the hosts of hell, all we who are here to-day, are either for Christ, or against Christ; we are all either "gatherers," or "scatterers;" either workmen in the erection of a vast spiritual fabric, or destroyers who lay its honour in the dust. Christ has thrown his seed into the wide field of the world, we either "gather" it, or "scatter" it; He desires to have a little flock in every household, we either "gather" them, or "scatter" them; He sends down spiritual gifts and treasures to be locked up in the hearts of His people, we either "gather" them, or "scatter" them; He has commanded the angels to gather up the sheaves for his everlasting garner, we must either be gathered up with those sheaves, or be scattered abroad by the terrific blasts of judgment. We remind you then, in the first place, that,

I. *You are scattering Christ's seed in the world if you are not gathering it.*

It is one of the "might have beens," if we may be allowed such an expression, in the divine economy of the universe, by which some shallow speculators think they could improve upon the plans of the Almighty, to suggest that He might have invested the christian religion with such sensible and commanding evidences of demonstration, that the whole race of mankind should

at once have embraced the faith, and have felt constrained to have yielded to it a cheerful and instantaneous obedience. But the Almighty is ever consistent, and ever one ; all the rest of His blessings come to us through the channels of human instrumentality, and so must this ; it is not because man is idle, or man is wicked, that the chariots of salvation will mend their speed ; for fixed as may be the time of their reaching their appointed goal, that period had been fixed sooner but for human slothfulness and neglect. No, brethren, if the gospel tree be slow to enlarge and spread, it is not that the seed cannot burst its shell, or that the sun hath no genial warmth, or that the clouds and the dew keep back their fructifying fatness ; but it is that our hands are slack to labour, we scatter when we ought to sow, we leave the birds to steal, and the thorns to choke, and the unbroken clods to obstruct and destroy the seed which should have borne fruit, not for ourselves alone, but for others also.

You think, perhaps, you are not scattering Christ's seed in the world because you are disseminating no pernicious doctrines, you countenance no immoral practices, and whatever your standard of religious obligation be, you never quarrel with others for having a standard higher than your own. To his own

master you would have him stand or fall ; you have no wish to be your brother's keeper, nor yet that your brother should be yours ; you would rather be as stars that dwell apart ; you would mark out for yourself a separate and independent orbit ; in a word, you would live unto yourself, and you would die unto yourself, and you would be judged by yourself, neither a gatherer nor a scatterer, but merely one who having a soul yourself, deem it enough to take care of that.

But surely, brethren, before taking this vow of moral insulation from the rest of mankind, there is a preliminary question to settle, namely, whether it is in your power to keep it. Can you neutralize the moral force of your own example? Can you prevent that having an effect either for good or for evil? No, it will attend you like your shadow every step you take, and the more exalted you are, the more gigantic will this shadow be. Some will tread in your steps from that imitative spirit which is more or less a part of our constitution ; they have no rules of their own, and so, like the chameleon, they borrow the whole complexion of their character from the object that happens to be nearest to them. Others will tread in them because, *finding them to be most congenial with their*

own wishes, they will be glad to take shelter under the example of those who certainly should know much better than themselves ; nay, some parts of your conduct will be imitated from a pretended necessity; if, in commercial dealings, they find you recognize no law but gain, they will say, we shall never compete with you if we recognize no rule but godliness; if you resort to artifice in trade, we cannot be open in our dealings; if you make yourselves rich by extortion and wrong, and by what, in the language of commercial blasphemy are called mere "trade-lies," the straight rule of equity and uprightness will reduce us to poverty.

These, indeed, may appear to be extreme cases, but the principle of imitation will be just the same when referred to all other parts of duty. The absence of the christian temper in your daily conduct, the absence of christian charitableness in your judgment upon your fellow-men, nay, the mere absence of all concern for the glory and spread of the Redeemer's triumphs, will all be, in effect, an absolute accession to the strength of the great adversary; and that for this simple reason, that the war Christ is carrying on is essentially aggressive, He has to snatch from the god of this world the wretched victims whom he has enslaved and ruined;

whilst Satan, on the other hand, would be content if he could keep what he has already obtained. Hence Satan does not care to make you his active emissaries; if you are spiritually dead, asleep, unconcerned about your souls, his purpose is answered; Christ is gaining no ground upon him, and this, in the case of all aggressive warfare, you know, is equivalent to defeat. To stand still, therefore, in spiritual things, is to help Satan; if you are not with Christ you are against him; if you gather not with him you are scattering abroad. Again,

II. *You are scattering Christ's flock in your families if you do not gather them.*

The application of our Lord's rule to the family differs only, from our former application of it to the world, in this respect, that in the family the force of example is not only more immediately felt, but it is moreover invested with all the sanctions of parental and family authority. The inconsistencies which we might notice in a friend whom we saw but seldom, or in the world with which we mixed but little, might offer a wound to our sensibilities, but these would be healed on our first return to a home where the name, and fear, and worship of the Most High were recognized, where the candle of the Lord was *burning brightly*, and the servants of the Lord

were walking blamelessly. But, then, it is at our homes that we should find our light, and if this light be darkness, how great is that darkness! It is almost necessarily an universal darkness, till in some unexpected part of the dwelling, grace Omnipotent proclaims, "Let there be light." But till that day arrives, the whole household is against Christ, both scattering and being scattered. The master is scattering, when he virtually proclaims to his servants, that their souls are no concerns of his; that he would not keep their hearts from prayer, only they must not kneel down with him; that he would not rob them of their Sabbath instruction, were it not that, on that day, he preferred to entertain his friends. The father is scattering, when beholding the fresh morning mercies which God hath bestowed upon his family, and knowing the moral dangers which are spread far and wide before them, he seeks no united blessing and puts up no united prayer before he leaves them. The husband is scattering, when by the arrangements of his household, the choice of his society, the disposal of the Sabbath time, he throws a stumbling-block in the way of his partner, who, but for him, perhaps, might have been enquiring the way to heaven. The mother is scattering,



who seeing the little immortal committed to her charge mimicking her every look, and tone, and gesture, she exhibits for its imitation, not the voice of prayer, but the tones of anger ; not the frankness of truth, but the arts of dissimulation and concealment ; not the look of supplication meekly veiling itself before the throne of God, but the eye swelling proudly with vanity and show.

From all this, it would seem, therefore, that neutrality in the family, in reference to this mighty controversy, is impossible ; you may be for Christ, or against Him ; but gather, or scatter you must. In tastes, and habits, and modes of speech, you know we necessarily borrow much from those around us ; children from parents, sisters from brothers, younger from elder ; and these influences are not likely to be less assimilating on the awful subject of religion, or what is too often the case, of no religion. So that all of us who are here present, but heads of families more particularly, have either been gathering or scattering for Christ this very day ; we cannot range ourselves on Satan's side without taking somebody else with us ; others would stand still because we stood still, and this was Satan's victory, and the *scattering of the Saviour's flock*. But again,

III. *You are scattering Christ's precious gifts in your own hearts, if you are not gathering them.*

The turning-point of true spiritual christianity, so far as our personal interest therein is concerned, consists in the experience of a work of grace upon the heart, whereby the mind is led to the voluntary choice of objects coincident and harmonizing with the great ends of our spiritual creation, thus turning us from the love of sin to the love of holiness, from the service of Satan to the obedience of faith, from a portion on earth to the choice of a portion in heaven. Such a change we could never have wrought for ourselves, and therefore, Christ hath ascended up on high to receive gifts for men, because he would have the Lord God to dwell among them. Various, unsuspected and unseen, are the channels through which these gifts are conveyed to us; grace does not always come through golden pipes; there are other olive-trees besides those of the sanctuary; afflictions, bereavements, things that the world calls accidents, are all ambassadors from the court of heaven, and are all laden with gifts from the King of kings,—rich return for the gold and frankincense, and myrrh, which were offered to the babe at Bethlehem. On

one He bestows the gift of serious thought, opened eyes, an alarmed conscience, robbing earth and time of their deceitful varnish, and investing judgment and eternity with all their attributes of solemn and stern reality. To another He brings the gift of godly sorrow, the spirit of the bowing bull-rush, and the heart of the stricken deer, affrighting memory with the dark-stained diary of an ungodly past, and conscience with the apprehension of an unrevealed and dreaded future. To another He imparts the gift of peace, a peace he knows not, a peace he has not yet desired, but a peace which the world had never given, shedding over the soul a serene and holy calm, the calm of forgiven sin, the calm of averted wrath, the calm of reconciled Deity, beaming in the marred visage of an incarnate Saviour. To another He brings the gift of spiritual light, and comfort, and joy; his pastures are always rich, and he walks by waters which are always still; light from heaven seems to stream upon his path, and strength from heaven seems to nerve him for holy duty, and smiles from heaven seem to antedate the day of his complete redemption, insomuch that life, with its burdens, affliction with its stings, death with *its terrors*, and retribution with all its penal

heraldry, cannot, during these times of his refreshing, disturb the sweet repose of his conviction, that all things are his, "because he is Christ's, and Christ is God's."

And yet, to the last as well as to the first, to the highest as much as to the lowest, of these gifts and tokens from the skies, does the rule of our text apply, that they will be scattered if they are not gathered ; if they be not collected, intertwined, bound up into one mighty cord, for the pulling down of the adversary's strongholds. Their whole strength lies in cohesion ; you may snap the attenuated flax, when you would strive in vain to break the cable ; to separate, therefore, is to weaken, to divide, is to destroy.

Gather up all your spiritual gifts, then, brethren, that nothing be lost ; the Saviour's fragments will fill more baskets than the sinner's loaves. The alarming providence of yesterday, and the striking text of to-day ; the condemning touch-stone in the sanctuary, and what you deem to be a mere casual expression out of it, are all gifts from the Saviour : but they must not spend their strength apart. Like globules of quicksilver, they are seen best when they are put together ; and like those globules, you will find they have great affinity too. What a wonderful coincidence, you will hear people say

sometimes, that whilst my mind was exercised by this trying providence, I should have lighted upon such a text of Scripture, or have heard such a singularly appropriate discourse from one of God's ministering servants. Yes, wonderful indeed, brethren, if it were a blind chance that overruled the universe; but not wonderful if we consider that the same Wisdom which ordains the providence, directs the eye to the text; and that He ordained this gracious coincidence, because when one message from heaven does not move you, He would graciously send you two. But, remember, you must consolidate these two, gather them up into the same bundle with the rest of your spiritual mercies, life spared, warning given, mercies vouchsafed, prayers answered, all must be gathered into one; for if not, you virtually scatter them. You know that dust will fly about if you do not moisten it, and seeds will be quickly scattered if you do not bind them; and therefore, the gifts which Christ sends to you must be bound together by cords of gratitude, and all the spiritual atoms He has thrown down upon your path must be cemented by the moistening dews of heaven.

Learn, then, to put all God's kind tokens together; beads both look best, and keep best, when

they are put upon a string ; and whether your beads be few or many they will all pay for gathering, and will be both scattered and lost if they are not gathered. You must not tell us, that you have none to scatter ; because, whoever you may be, the apostle assures us that you have: for he says, that, “ to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Consider, then, what use you are making of the gifts which Christ hath given you ; if with the knowledge you have that the winds of an ungodly world are blowing furiously about you, you take no pains to bind up your gifts, it is plain that you do not care to see them frittered away ; and thus, in you, we have a melancholy illustration of the truth asserted in our text, “ Whoso gathereth not with me scattereth.”

But oh ! this text must have a more awful illustration still ; Christ’s gatherers and Christ’s scatterers must have one more meeting yet, and only one. The *gathered* seed shall expand and ripen till it becomes fit for the garners and the stores of heaven ; the *gathered* flock shall rise from earth and sea to pass under the portals of the everlasting fold ; the *gathered* graces of the believer shall be purged from their earthly dross, forming, by their

clustered brightness the new name upon his brow ; but if, on the other hand, you are scatterers, and sheltering yourselves behind the plea of religious indifference: then, the *scattered* seed which you did not prize, the *scattered* flock which you would not feed, the *scattered* graces which you would neither seek, nor keep, nor bind up, shall all rise up in judgment against you, and in their turn shall scatter you. Christ Himself will be the only gatherer then. He will gather His treasures from the deep, His spoils from the grave, His saints from earth's unknown and remotest verge, because with these is His travail recompensed, and with these does His diadem shine ; but the rest will be treated as they treated Him, His seed, His flock, His sacred and dearly-purchased gifts, namely, scattered as worthless, trampled upon as foes, and left to inherit the undying portion they had chosen, that of those who had been scatterers for Christ, and gatherers for the enemy of souls ! Amen.

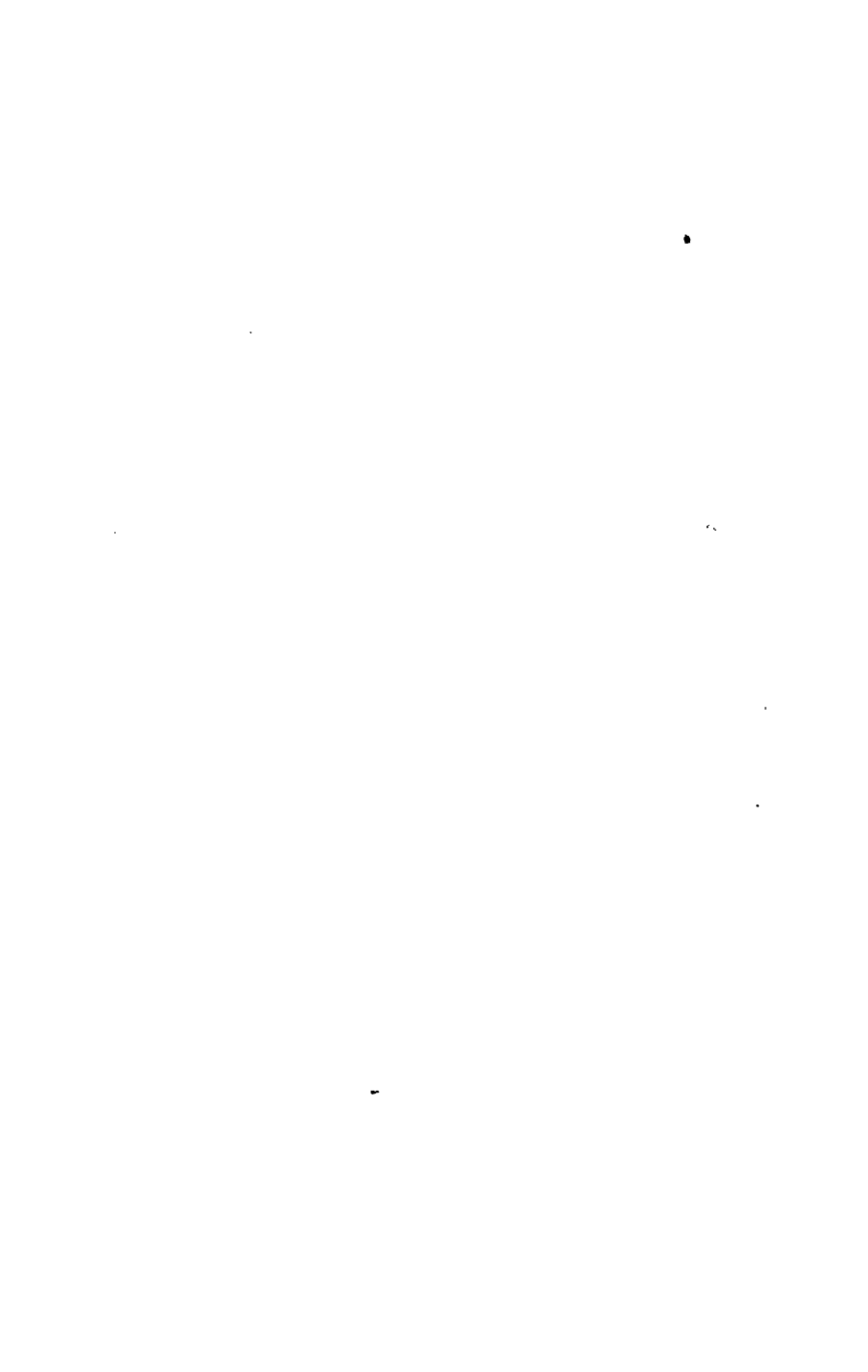
## LECTURE II.

BY THE

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# RELIGIOUS CONVICTION,

ITS HOPEFULNESS, &c.

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ST. JOHN, xvi. 8.

*“ And when he is come, he will reprove the world  
of sin.”*

THE present Course of Lectures is evidently so constructed as to give a connected and comprehensive view of man's spiritual condition. Hence it begins with his *natural*, proceeds to his *gracious*, and ends with his *glorified* state. Last Thursday evening you doubtless had laid before you that sad and awful insensibility to eternal things, which alas! characterises fallen man. It is not this or that individual, but all, without exception, that are naturally indifferent to the concerns of their immortal souls. Such carelessness, however, is both the height of presumption

and of folly, when we take into account the paramount importance of religion, and the shortness and uncertainty of life. It is therefore to be strongly deprecated and deeply regretted by every well-wisher to the human race, and more especially by the under shepherds of Christ's flock, who, like their Divine Master, ought to be moved with compassion, when they behold the multitudes scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. And I doubt not that your Minister, in selecting topics for your devout meditation at this sacred season, was actuated by a fervent desire that the *thoughtless* among you might be awakened, under the Divine blessing, to a heartfelt solicitude about the salvation of their souls, and that the serious might be led on in their holy and blessed course, until established in faith and holiness, and finally crowned with everlasting bliss and honour.

In furtherance of this important and useful design, my brethren, it falls to my lot this evening to take you by the hand, as it were, and conduct you to the borders of the kingdom of God—to trace the first step towards the heavenly country—to lay open the very beginnings of vital godliness in the soul of the true *christian*. For the subject which I am called

upon to handle, is *Religious Conviction*, by which, I presume, is intended "conviction of sin." At least, this is the light in which I have regarded it, and purpose to exhibit it to you. In doing which I shall simply endeavour to *explain the nature of conviction*, according to the representation of it in the text.

Only may it please God, of His great mercy, to grant, that as many of you as have not yet experienced this work of the Spirit, may so feel it that it may issue in the conversion and salvation of your souls!

I. In laying before you the nature of conviction. I would first shew you who are its *subjects*—the persons convinced of sin. In the text they are called "the world," by which, however, cannot be meant every individual of the human race, because to say that all mankind, without exception, are reprov~~ed~~ of sin, would be contrary to experience and facts. For we find that in all ages since the fall, men in general, as doubtless you heard in the preceding Lecture, are notoriously indifferent about the salvation of their souls, which they could not be, were they convinced of sin. Look at the antediluvians, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Mark the account given of them in the 17th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel,

and the 27th and following verses: "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." "Likewise, also, in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Learn from the parable of the marriage feast how the Jews received the gospel. They "made light of it and went their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize," each praying to be excused, and saying that he could not come. Whether it be not the same now-a-days, let your own observation testify. Whether men are not so engrossed with their pleasures or their business as to neglect the one thing needful, the great salvation of the gospel. And that it will be so at the second coming of Christ, we know on His own authority. For He hath said, "As it was in the days of Noe," and in the days of Lot, "so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." By "the world," therefore, as used in the text, cannot be meant all men without exception; but, it signifies the Gentiles, as *well as the Jews*, and specially, all on whom

the name of the Lord is called—all the elect people of God—his sheep, those whom the Father chose in Christ before the foundation of the world unto salvation, and gave to His Son—those for whom the Son of God shed his precious blood, to whom he gives eternal life, and whom both He and his Father protect and preserve for ever. *These are “the world”* which the Holy Ghost convinces of sin. Hence the marked difference between those who enjoy the same religious advantages. While one is enlightened and awakened, another remains asleep, yea, dead in trespasses and sins. Two individuals seated on the same bench, or in the same pew, sitting perhaps next to each other, hear the same sermon. To the one it comes home and makes a deep and abiding impression. Upon the other it makes no impression at all. So free, so sovereign is the grace of God. O let us learn to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to the Divine love and pity. “Truly it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” At the same time, however, beware my brethren, of perverting the free grace of God to spiritual sloth and negligence. Rather be as diligent in using the appointed means of grace, and as active and persevering in your

exertions, as if your salvation depended upon your own strength.

II. The next point to be considered, in order to understand the nature of religious conviction, is, what we may call, the *matter* and the *manner* of conviction, or the internal process of this work—the mental and moral operations going on in the soul while under the convicting power of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost will reprove, or as it is in the margin of your Bibles, and as the original imports, will *convince* the world of sin. The *matter*, then, or that of which the individual is convicted, is *sin*; and the *manner* will be seen while I endeavour to describe the internal process—the operations of the mind and heart under conviction. All this is comprehended in the term, “reprove,” or convince.

The first feeling, then, produced in the convicted soul, is *a lively and deep consciousness of personal sinfulness*—such a consciousness as it never experienced before. The man used, indeed, to know and acknowledge that he was a sinner. But it was only in a loose, vague manner, without any definite meaning, or any deep and lasting impression. His previous knowledge of sin excited no anxiety and disquietude,

awakened no fears, and gave birth neither to earnest prayers nor to strenuous endeavours after salvation. But now he *feels* himself to be a sinner, a *miserable* offender. He freely and heartily acknowledges that he has erred and strayed from God's ways like a lost sheep, that he has followed too much the devices and desires of his own heart, that he has offended against God's holy laws, that he has left undone those things which he ought to have done, and that he has done those things which he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him. He calls his past sins to remembrance. He is always reflecting upon them. He can say with David, "My sin is ever before me." He tries to recollect them as particularly as he can. But he cannot count them. For they are more than the hairs of his head. Nor does he view them in their number only, but also in their greatness. He regards them in all their aggravations—as committed against the privileges and advantages of the christian dispensation; against light and grace; against knowledge, oft-repeated vows and resolutions; perhaps against the instructions, prayers, and example of pious parents; and against many warnings and blessings received from above. If there be any thing peculiarly favourable in



his circumstances, he adds it to the amount of his sinfulness, and the result is that he is apt to look upon himself as the chief of sinners.

But it is not to his *actual* sins only that he confines his attention. He regards his *natural* corruption also. To this, indeed, he traces his sinful thoughts, words, and actions, as to their source. "Behold," he exclaims with David, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." He judges of his nature, in its present fallen state, by its dispositions and conduct—just as you judge of a fountain by its streams, or of a tree by its fruits. Hence he feels and confesses himself to be a transgressor from the womb, and so depraved as to require to be born again before he can enter into the kingdom of God.

Intimately connected with, and immediately resulting from this consciousness of personal sinfulness, is *a thorough conviction of guilt in the sight of God*. Sin necessarily brings guilt along with it. Every transgressor of the divine law has incurred the wrath of heaven, and the penalty of sin. And what that penalty is, let the word of God say, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." The convicted offender, *therefore, feels himself to be under the curse*

of God's broken law; to be lying under the sentence of eternal death, the wages of sin. Hence he is afraid, perhaps alarmed, at the sight of his imminent danger and misery. Here, indeed, there is a great difference between the feelings of one man and another. Some feel but a moderate degree of fear. They are exercised more with humiliation on account of their extreme unworthiness, and the pollution of sin, than with dread on the score of its direful effects. But others suffer great terrors of mind on this latter account, and sink into irremediable despair, like Cain and Judas; the former of whom exclaimed, when God gave sentence against him, "My punishment is greater than I can bear;" and the latter "went and hanged himself." This, however, was for want of faith in the mercy of God through Christ. Had Cain possessed the faith of his brother Abel, he would meekly have submitted to the Divine judgment pronounced upon him, have humbled himself before his justly offended Maker, have implored forgiveness, and been comforted and renewed by the enjoyment of it. Had Judas had the faith of Peter, instead of being driven by a guilty conscience into desperation, and the dreadful sin of suicide, he would rather have imitated his brother apostle in his

godly sorrow, and, when he reflected upon the enormous crime which he had committed, have "wept bitterly." Despair, so far from being *essential* to that saving conviction which the Spirit produces, is incompatible with it. Neither is terror absolutely necessary to it. But fear is. Conviction cannot but generate *such a degree* of apprehension and alarm (which is all that is necessary) in the heart of the sinner, as to make him anxious about his eternal safety. Thus, when Josiah heard "that the Lord spake against Jerusalem and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become as desolation and a curse, he humbled himself before Him, and rent his clothes, and wept before Him." And (which is a case more in point) the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost, were pricked in their heart when they heard that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ, and "said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We perceive the same alarm and anxiety in the jailor of Philippi, when the earthquake shook the prison to its foundations, and all the doors flew open, and when the voice of St. Paul arrested him in the very act of self-destruction. Awakened to his guilt and danger, he "called

for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Now, though the conviction of the jailor, and of the three thousand, was miraculous and sudden, yet the very same conviction, in substance, is necessary in all. The only difference is, that in our case, it is generally produced by degrees, and is *always* to be sought and expected *only* in a faithful use of all the appointed means of grace; and, more especially, of the ministry of the gospel. The gospel addresses us as miserable, lost sinners; and, therefore, there *must* be a sense of guilt and wretchedness, or else its remedy will not be applied. "The whole need not a physician, but the sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

But the process of conviction is not complete without *a keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and a consequent deep humiliation of soul*. Wherever the Spirit convinces of sin, He produces this effect. If this perception and feeling of the character of moral evil be wanting, there *may* be a *legal*, but there *cannot* be an *evangelical* conviction. The gospel believed—the mercy of God in Christ revealed in the heart—melts and subdues the soul. It abases

it to the very dust. The law may *terrify* by its denunciations, when the transgressor sees the everlasting punishment which awaits him, but it cannot *soften* and *humble*. It is merely the consequences, and not the sinfulness of sin that alarms the legally convicted transgressor. But he who is spiritually reprov'd of sin by the Holy Ghost, perceives sin in its true light, and when he considers the number and the magnitude of his actual offences, and the total corruption of his nature, and contrasts them with the infinite holiness and goodness of God, he is filled with grief, shame, and self-abasement. Accordingly, the prophets in predicting the conversion of God's people, represent them as "*loathing* themselves in their own sight for all their evils that they have committed." And thus it was with Job and Isaiah, when they saw the glory of God. The former says, "Behold I am vile; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The latter exclaims, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." But perhaps the feelings of contrition are nowhere more beautifully portrayed, or more pointedly ascribed to the gracious influence of the Spirit, than in that well-known passage of Zechariah, "I will *pour* upon the house of David, and upon the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Here, however, I am anticipating the subject of the Brother who is to follow me in these Lectures. For this godly sorrow for sin—this humiliation on account of its exceeding sinfulness, is one of the effects and evidences of conversion. Whereas conviction is not conversion. It is rather the mean between it and indifference—not conversion itself, but preparatory to it, and frequently, though by no means invariably, issuing in it. *Legal* conviction—that which is produced by the *law*, and arises merely from a regard to the *consequences* of sin—may or may not lead to conversion. *Evangelical* conviction—that which is generated by the *gospel*, and by a view of the *guilt* as well as the effects of sin, and which prompts the penitent to confess before his God, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done evil in Thy sight"—this *evangelical* conviction is sure to end in conversion.

Having thus developed the internal process of conviction, and described its operations, I

proceed to state its *Author*, which is necessary to give you a complete view of it.

It is said in the text, “*He* will reprove the world of sin.” *He*, that is, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, whom Christ was to send from the Father, and who was to come into the world, as He did at Pentecost, in his *extraordinary* power, and as He has done ever since in His *ordinary influence*, in order to carry on the work of salvation on earth, while our great High Priest is carrying it on in heaven—in order to apply redemption to the hearts of God’s chosen people, and to render them meet for an inheritance among the saints in light. The *Holy Spirit*, then, is the *Author* of conviction.

But though He is its efficient cause, it being by His enlightening, quickening, and regenerating influence, that the penitent is convinced of His guilt and danger, yet He is pleased to employ *subordinate* agents in the work. And these agents are *conscience*, *natural phænomena*, *providential visitations*, *Scripture*, and the *moral law of God*.

*Conscience* is God’s vicegerent in the breast, and though this judge is too often bribed to deliver an unjust and partial verdict in the sinner’s favour; yet, when the Spirit of God *enlightens* and awakens it, it accuses and con-

demns. See what an electric effect it had upon those self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, who brought unto Jesus a woman taken in adultery, to see whether He would enforce the Mosaic law that she should be stoned to death, and to whom our Saviour said; "Let him that is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her." "And they which heard it *being convicted by their own conscience*, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last."

The influence which *natural phænomena* sometimes have in the production of religious conviction, appears from the effect which the earthquake had on the jailor at Philippi. It shook his sturdy mind as much as the walls of the prison.

The awakening influence of *providential visitations*, is testified by the salutary impression which affliction often makes upon the mind, and the many conversions to be traced to its instrumentality. How frequently is an alarming accident, or a fit of dangerous sickness, the means of first calling a man's attention to his eternal welfare, and the occasion of God's "reproving him for his sins and setting them in order before him."

The power of *the word of God*, especially when preached, in producing conviction of sin,



appears from the instance of the first converts to Christianity, who were pricked in their heart—stung by their conscience—by Peter's sermon. It is also apparent from what St. Paul says to the Corinthians on the subject of prophesying, or the gift of interpreting the unknown tongues, and expounding the word of God. "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and, so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The secret of this lies in the penetrating influence of Divine truth. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

But that by which the Spirit more directly convinces of sin, is *the moral law of God*. "By the law," says St. Paul, "is the knowledge of sin." "I had not known sin but by the law. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." "I through the law am dead to the law, that *I might* live unto God." Men are naturally

ignorant of the true meaning of the law. They know not how holy it is, how extensive its demands, how awful its sanctions! They confine their attention to the letter, and overlook the spirit. And as long as they continue unacquainted with the law, they remain unconvinced of sin, insensible to their sinfulness and guilt, and perfectly careless about their salvation. But let the Spirit open their eyes to the strictness of the Divine commandments, to the perfect holiness, and justice, and goodness of the law, and they behold themselves lost and condemned. Moreover, when their fears and solicitude about their eternal welfare have subsided, they begin to perceive in the mirror of the law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and their own vileness in the Divine sight.

Such is conviction. Its *subjects*—those who experience it are no longer confined to one nation, but are taken out of the whole world. They consist of, either the hearers of the word of God generally, or the chosen people of God in particular. Its *operations* are a consciousness of personal sinfulness, a thorough conviction of guilt and danger, and profound humiliation under a lively sense of unworthiness and vileness. Its *Author* is the *Holy Ghost*, acting through the instrumentality of *conscience*.

*natural phænomena, providential events, Scripture, and the moral law.*

Examine yourselves, my Brethren, whether *you* have undergone this progress, whether the Spirit has convinced you of sin, whether you are conscious of your sinfulness both by nature and practice, whether you have been awakened to a conviction of your danger and misery as sinners, and whether you are humbled under a sense of your pollution before God. If not, you will feel no concern about your souls, but lead a careless and worldly, if not a vicious, life, and slight the stupendous means appointed by God for your restoration to His favour. And can any thing be conceived more lamentable or dreadful than this? For “how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” “If we sin wilfully” (and the greatest of all sin is unbelief) “after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Oh, then, encouraged by the promise of the Spirit to them that ask for it, pray earnestly and importunately that He may be vouchsafed to you, to reprove you of sin—to demonstrate to your judgment, and to impress *upon your heart*—your own personal sinfulness,

and the extreme peril and misery into which you have plunged yourselves.

But if you are convinced of sin, be thankful. Your condition is hopeful. You will now, we trust, seek deliverance from your unhappy situation, and seeking, you will find—find a rescue from eternal woe, and exaltation to perfect, everlasting happiness and glory. Only beware of *resting* in your convictions, and mistaking them for conversion. They are only preliminary to it—the threshold of the temple. Felix must have been convinced of sin, and that acutely too, when the Apostle “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” or else he would not have trembled. And yet it is to be feared from his stifling his convictions and putting off attention to his spiritual concerns, that he perished in his sins. Think it not enough, therefore, to be convinced of sin, but regard your sense of guilt, as mercifully intended to lead to a thorough conversion of heart and life unto God, and accordingly now pray for the Spirit to convince you of *righteousness*—the utter worthlessness of your own righteousness, and the all-sufficiency of Christ’s. Apply without delay to Him who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, and as willing as He is able.

In short, I would address you in the words of St. Peter, and say, "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

# LECTURE III.

BY THE

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## CONVERSION,

ITS NATURE AND NECESSITY.

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ST. JOHN, iii. 9, 10.

*“ Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things ?”*

“ ART thou a Master of Israel and knowest not these things ?” is an expression which is evidently intended to convey censure. High and mysterious as were the truths which Jesus set forth, Nicodemus ought, as a teacher of the law, to have been previously acquainted with them ; for he is blamed on account of his ignorance, and blamed by One who will not suffer Himself to be called a hard Master, who reaps not where He has not sown, and gathers not where He has not strawed.

Now, if Nicodemus ought to have been acquainted with these truths, and if his ignorance



of them was blamable, it follows that they were not new truths, but old ones ; not now set forth for the first time, but somehow or other embodied and contained in the Mosaic dispensation, and therefore plainly within the reach of an earnest enquirer, and plainly such as it became a Master of Israel—an appointed teacher under that dispensation, to have both understood himself, and have explained to others. We do not see how it is possible for any one who reads the words of our blessed Lord attentively, and considers their meaning, to escape from this conclusion : but it is a conclusion which is abundantly strengthened by many other passages in the New Testament Scriptures. If we turn to the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we shall find St. Stephen thus addressing the Jewish council, “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye.” And again, if we refer to the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we shall find it written, “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and *not in the letter* ; whose praise is not of men,

but of God." The 9th chapter of the same Epistle contains a similar declaration ; and very similar statements occur in the Epistles to the Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians ; while all these passages refer us back to the very language of the Mosaic Covenant, as expressed in the 10th and 30th chapters of the book of Deuteronomy,—“ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.” And again, “ And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

We see then, not only that Nicodemus ought to have known, that it was necessary to be born again of the Holy Spirit ; but we see further, where and how he might have learnt it. We see that, at least in this point, the analogy between the Old and New Dispensations is complete ; that circumcision was to the Jewish church, what baptism is to the Christian church, an external ceremony, the pledge of internal and spiritual blessings : and if we examine further, we shall find, that as in the one infant church membership was expressly commanded ; so in the other it is evidently implied : that in both the infant, himself incapable of faith and

holiness—incapable of the true circumcision of the heart, or of the true baptism of the Spirit, was or is to be received, in expectation of his future endeavours to live as God requires his people to live; and, in a full assurance that He will certainly perform his promises in the case of every child, who when past the age of weakness and of helplessness, and come to years of maturity shall earnestly seek to walk according to His will. Finally, the analogy holds good in the melancholy fact, that as in the Jewish church a great majority of those who were circumcised, and who, but for their own fault, might have inherited the promises, remained uncircumcised in heart and spirit, unholy and unregenerate; so too in the Christian church, multitudes of baptized persons are neither born of the Spirit, nor converted, nor holy, because they have not sought to realize those privileges to which baptism might have introduced them. We have called this a melancholy fact. It stands before us as a fact—a fact of which we can take cognizance with our own eyes and ears—a fact of which our senses assure us, when we behold baptized Christians living without God in the world, and hear them expressing their decided hostility to real and spiritual religion. But we *must* remember, that it is a fact for which we

ought to be prepared:—1st. from the example of the Jewish church, where all were not Israel that were of Israel; 2ndly. from the express declarations of Scripture, where the visible Church of Christ is described as a field in which wheat and tares grow together until the harvest—as a net cast into the sea, and enclosing a great multitude of fishes, both bad and good; and, finally, from the accounts which are handed down to us of the Apostolic churches in the Apostolic Epistles, in all of which this mixed character is plainly discernible, in some of which the number of mere professors seems to have far exceeded the number of spiritual and converted persons. The angel or bishop of the Church of Sardis—an Apostolic church—is thus addressed by the Saviour himself, in the 3rd chapter of the book of the Revelation of St. John—“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” And the condition of that church is presently after thus described—“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.” Therefore it follows, that the great majority of that church were persons of a different character, persons who were defiled, persons whose faith or whose practice was corrupt. And how must such persons be

addressed? How did the Saviour himself address Nicodemus, a circumcised Jew, who knew nothing of the true circumcision of the heart, but who ought to have understood and experienced it, and is blamed for his wilful ignorance? He met him at once, on the very threshold of his enquiry after truth, with the solemn, searching doctrine of spiritual regeneration. Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The question which we proposed to you is, we think, sufficiently answered.

We address you then, dear Brethren, to-night on the nature and necessity of conversion; and we begin by telling you that you must be born again—not merely born of water, which is the external part, which was used by Nicodemus and the Jewish Doctors generally, in the baptism of their proselytes and disciples—but you must likewise be born of the Spirit, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "You must be born again." This is a large and *comprehensive* phrase. It includes much. It

means much. It is not a new name, or a new set of opinions, or a new rule to govern the actions, that constitutes a new birth. No: the change which these words denote, is one of a very different kind—a change so complete, that the Apostle Paul hesitates not to say respecting it, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” It is evident that both Christ and His Apostle are speaking of a mighty reality—of a change so great that the man who has undergone it is as much a different being in his spiritual nature, as if he had been born over again, or created a second time.

Let us see, then, in what this change consists. It extends to and affects the condition, the character, and the conduct.

First, the condition. Our natural state is one of enmity with God. This is the state in which we were born into the world—“We,” says the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, “were the children of wrath even as others:” and this because of inherited guilt and actual transgression. But in Christ we are new creatures. “Now in Christ Jesus,” he exclaims, “ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” And again, “You that were sometimes alienated and ex-

mies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." While as to the manner in which this change in our condition is effected, he assures us that faith in Christ's atonement is the medium of its conveyance to us—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But this thorough change of condition must be accompanied by as thorough a change of character in order to constitute us new creatures. The completeness of this change may be gathered from the language in which it is described—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." As real and essential as is the difference between light and darkness, so real and essential is the difference between the spiritual and the natural mind—between the character which is created in us through faith in Christ and sanctification of the Spirit, and the character which is born with us and inherited from our first parents. Our motives and our principles of action are changed: our hopes and our desires are fixed on other objects. Instead of being the servants of sin, we have become the servants of God: we are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God *dwell*eth in us. "The carnal mind," says the

Apostle, that is, the natural mind, "is enmity against God." How different is the mind of the Christian! "But we have the mind of Christ." Can any change be more complete?

Finally, the change of character which has been effected in the Christian manifests itself in a change of conduct. The fruits of the flesh have given place in him to the fruits of the Spirit—"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." He walks as a child of the light. He delights in the law of God after the inward man, and endeavours to shew that he is born of God by doing righteousness.

Brethren, remember that you have no right to assume to yourselves the name of "new creatures," unless you can prove the reality of the change effected in you by the conclusive evidence of a holy and religious life. Yours is indeed a glorious calling. Your condition, your character as Christians, in what glowing language are they set forth in the pages of the Bible! It seems as if words were weak to express the fulness of your privileges! The tongue that describes them must speak, as it were, Angels' words. The pencil that sets them forth must be dipped in the hues of heaven. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an



holy nation, a peculiar people :”—but for what purpose, and with what object selected ? “That ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” Oh, when you consider what you were and what you are—that “in time past you were not a people,” “but are now the people of God ;” that “you had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy”—must you not feel that the description of Jesus and his Apostle applies to *you*, if you are Christians indeed ; that *you* “are born again,” that *you* “are new creatures,” that “old things are passed away,” and that “all things are become new.”

Thus far we have endeavoured to shew that the solemn warning, “Ye must be born again,” is one which we are warranted by the authority and example of our blessed Lord himself, in addressing to nominal members of the Church—to all in fact who have never felt the power of real and spiritual religion. We have further seen in what this new birth consists—that with regard to its nature, it is a mighty change extending to the condition, the character, and the conduct—that the Spirit of God is its Author ; and faith in Christ, an appropriating *faith*, which realizes all that He has done as

done for us individually, is the medium by which the Spirit acts.

Before we pass on to the second division of our subject—the necessity of conversion, we must address one passing remark to those who have reason to believe that they are converted persons. They will find much of evil still clinging to them. Roots of bitterness will remain in the heart, and motions of sin will make themselves felt. For, as the ninth Article of our Church asserts, “The infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated.” “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.” “We find a law within us, that when we would do good evil is present with us.” As St. Paul says again, “We see another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members.” How, then, shall we resist this internal power of evil? How shall we overcome it? The answer is simple. By resisting we acquire the power to resist. God approves the effort which originates in His own grace, and accompanies it with the effectual influences of His Holy Spirit. “This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh,” is a precept accompanied by a most consolatory promise. As

surely as we endeavour to obey it, so surely shall we have strength given us, in order to bring our endeavours to a successful issue.

We proceed to consider the second division of our subject—the necessity of conversion—“Ye must be born again.” “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

These are plain and positive declarations, and they were spoken by Him from whose authority there is no appeal: whose word emphatically is *truth*.

But whence this necessity? Our blessed Lord's own language will furnish an answer to the question—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Hence the absolute need of being born again. Let us look for a moment at the analogy of nature, as it is set forth and explained by St. Paul. The seed that is committed to the earth comes not up in the same form, but undergoes a mighty change, and perishes in the process of re-production. “Thou fool,” exclaims the Apostle in reply to the caviller, who could see these things going on in nature, and yet hesitate to admit the doctrine of a future and glorious resurrection: “Thou fool! that which *thou sowest* is not quickened except it die: and

that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

Hence he proceeds to argue that man is subjected to this universal law of existence—that the corporeal frame, which was fitted for earth, must be, from its very constitution, unfit for heaven;—"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Hence the necessity, as regards the body, that though "sown in dishonour," it should be "raised in glory,"—though "sown in weakness," it should be "raised in power,"—though "sown a natural body," it should be "raised a spiritual body,"—that in one word, "this corruptible should put on incorruption, and this mortal should put on immortality," in order to become meet for its future and eternal destinies. But may we not carry this argument further? Must we not carry it further? Does it not apply to the soul with still stronger force? Shall we determine that the natural body is unfit for heaven, and that "the natural mind," which, Scripture assures us, is "enmity against God," is fit for the enjoyment of His

glorious presence? Shall we determine that there is need for the resurrection of the corporeal, but no need for the resurrection of the moral and intellectual—that which constitutes us men, and makes us what we are? Can we believe that while it is required, that the body should become a spiritual body, it is not required that the mind should become a spiritual mind? What, then, becomes of all those passages of Scripture which urge upon us the necessity of this moral change? What shall we say to the language of St. Paul, in the 6th and 8th chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” “To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any *man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none*

of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

What shall we say to the solemn exhortation, which this same Apostle addresses to the Colossian converts? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

We see, Brethren, that it must be so—that as the flesh and blood of our mortal bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God; so neither can the fleshly appetites—the carnal thoughts and affections of the natural man—become capable, by any process, of attaining unto his glorious dwelling-place. No, they must be destroyed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and therefore St. Paul, desiring to set forth the necessity of its absolute annihilation, exclaims, "They that are Christ's have crucified

the flesh with the affections and lusts;" and again, "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your minds; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." If, Brethren, there be any here who cannot receive this doctrine, we entreat them to enquire whether the reason may not be, that they entertain low and unscriptural thoughts of the holiness of Him whose name is holy. Let them but reflect that He chargeth His angels with folly, and that the Cherubim veil their faces, while they pour out before His throne their tribute of eternal praise. Let them think of these things, and then say, whether they would dare, even in imagination, to place the carnal and worldly and unregenerate in the Christian's heaven, and in the presence of the Christian's God?

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh: but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." At the moment when the soul believed in Jesus, and rested by faith upon His finished *sacrifice*—at that moment—in that act of be-

lieving, there was given to it a principle of eternal life—a germ of holiness and purity—the promise of final sanctification—the pledge of future glory. Let us see what St. Paul says respecting this, in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “In whom,” he says, that is, in Christ, “ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” This is the present state of those who are born again. They are sealed with the Spirit—“the Spirit of promise,” as He is called, in earnest of their attainment unto the inheritance of the saints in light. But the seal of the Spirit is twofold. One side of it God reads—“The Lord knoweth them that are His.” This side is visible to *His* eye alone. The characters on the other side are easy to be read by man, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” This seal is on our foreheads. It was placed there when the waters of baptism introduced us into the visible church. Oh, let us take heed that it be on our hearts too, that through the sealing of the Spirit there—ministered to us internally—we may be members of



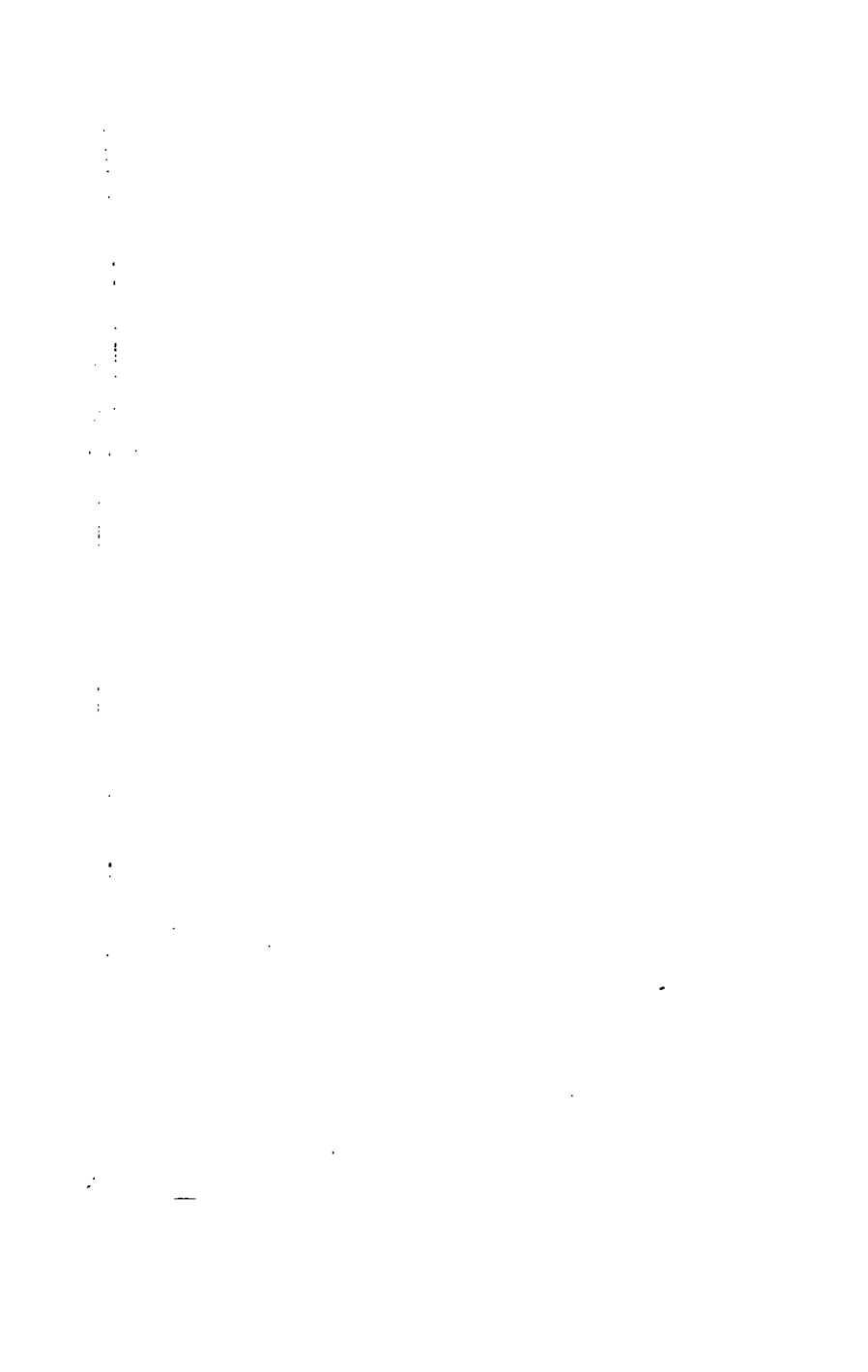
the spiritual church ; may glorify Christ on earth ; and may ascribe glory and dominion for ever, in His eternal kingdom, “ unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God His Father.”

# LECTURE IV.

BY THE

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## THE RELIGIOUS LIFE,

ITS DIFFICULTIES AND DISCOURAGEMENTS.

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1 PETER, iv. 18.

*“If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”*

THERE is one truth connected with the religious life which it is important for the Christian perpetually to bear in mind, not merely that it may lead him to suspect his own state, if he has never realized it; but that the present experience of it may encourage him to persevere; and that is, that the religious life is not one of indulgence or repose. A cursory glance at many of the Saviour's expressions concerning the religion He came to teach, and at the views which the Apostles were compelled practically to entertain of it, will shew us the nature of the condition to which it subjects every sincere believer. Heaven is therein represented as a rest: Earth as a scene of trial and

conflict; so that the ordinary terms used in illustrating the subject, describe this feature very strongly. Sometimes it is called a cross, sometimes a thorny road, a battle, a warfare, a race. At all times it presents to us the notion of struggling, difficulty, and discouragement. A thoughtful mind would at once apprehend the truth and consistency of such a statement, from the comparison of human corruption with the laws of holiness and love. For sin in us is not the mere absence of good. It is not that we are only without virtue, but ready to receive its impressions. It is that we hate the good and choose the evil. Our sin within us is a state of enmity to God. Our ignorance consists not in the absence of knowledge so much, as in a dislike to the light. We have something to overcome before we can choose, much less fulfil the least of God's commandments. Hence, the difficulty. The first view which the awakened mind is apt to take of religion is an ardent one. We are for rushing on our course with impetuous zeal. We despise difficulties. We have to learn that shame, and sorrow, and faintness of heart, are much more the portion of God's own children, than of any one else. And why? Because the old man within us, the lust of the flesh is not killed though opposed. As the salvation

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of each man is an individual, and so far, an unconnected work, so the religious conflict of each man is a thing apart from his neighbour's. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." The Saviour consequently exhorts every man to take up his own cross, and represents the kingdom of heaven as being taken by the violent. And the Apostle Peter, in the text, gives us a general representation, and implies in it the individuality of the difficulties of the religious life. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" For, in these words, the Apostle must not be understood to express any doubt of the final safety of God's chosen ones. The very opening of his beautiful letter forbids it. He speaks to them that are "elect through sanctification unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." He blesses God who has "begotten them again, regenerated them, unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for those who are *kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*" No! he who was so solemnly commanded to feed Christ's sheep, could not forget that image which Jesus drew of Himself as a Shepherd, when He said, "my sheep hear

my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." What the text presents to us is an argument, "a *fortiori*" against sin, the point of which is—not that the salvation of a man is hard to God, but that it is as it were a narrow escape for the righteous. They are saved *with labour or difficulty*, for that is the literal meaning of the expression "μόλις σώζεται." Salvation, that is, is accompanied with labour. And why? Because the difficulties and discouragements of the religious life arise from ourselves. Satan and the world would have no part in us, if we were not unfaithful to our own interests, if we had not in our own flesh a far more subtle and determined foe than either; a foe, the restraining and subduing of whom costs ourselves the most. In speaking of the difficulties of the Christian life, therefore, we must always look into each man's own heart, if we would go to their source. The wicked man is a whole man. He has no difficulties, no bands in sin, for every thing within and without him are pulling one way. But the moment that the grace of God takes possession of a heart, the man is divided, rent, tortured. Look at the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and see what a description the Apostle there gives of himself. After shewing

completely, how he was, as it were, set against himself, in order to describe it more forcibly, he borrows an image from that awful punishment which used to be visited upon pirates, that of manacling two of them together, and leaving the one that survived his comrade to drag his putrefying corpse about with him. Nothing stronger could be intended therefore, as descriptive of the opposition which grace plants between man and his lusts than the exclamation, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And if this, therefore, be true of the child of God, what must be the condition of the man who has no struggle, no conflict, no sorrow? Oh! but the difficulties of the Christian race are, after all, its comforts. The text, however, is a general assertion of the subject upon which I have been requested to address you to night. It is not to be supposed that the peculiar trials of individual Christians can be noticed here. My purpose is to glance at those difficulties and discouragements, for which every sincere Christian must look out in his religious course. In so doing, I propose to consider the source of all our conflict, and

I. To specify the nature of the difficulties of the religious life.

II. To point out the quarter from which *they rise*.



III. To offer some practical suggestions in reference to them.

May God the Holy Spirit, that overcometh sin in us, sanctify this subject, and the remarks I shall be permitted to offer you, to our souls.

I. Before we commence our first point, I would observe, that the difficulties and discouragements of the religious life are not the same thing. The difficulty is the obstacle that we meet. The discouragement is the effect which that obstacle, more or less, produces on the hopes and fears of the heart. In ascertaining the difficulties, therefore, we ascertain the causes of discouragement. And we must bear in mind that our discouragement arises purely from ourselves, and not from God. "In Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." This accounts for the differences that exist in the Christian character, with reference to the degree of discouragement under which persons labour. Some are more easily depressed than others—some retain a buoyancy of cheerfulness which carries them through repeated obstacles. But in all cases the discouragements are to be traced to ourselves; that is, to the difficulties we are respectively experiencing in our Christian race; so that in *ascertaining* the one, we have the key to the

other; and in finding out the remedy for the difficulty, we obtain the cure for the discouragement. Supposing, then, that a person has been awakened by the Spirit of God, and brought to a knowledge of his own necessities, and of the atonement of the Redeemer; in short, that he has been converted, what are the difficulties which in a greater or less degree he must be prepared to find in his future religious life? There appear to me to be five subjects of difficulty which every sincere Christian must experience.

The first matter of difficulty will be *the controlling of his besetting sins*. When a man is "turned from idols to serve the living God," the grand thought of his heart is to be conformed to the image of Christ. The Apostle did not merely express it, therefore, as a duty, but as an inseparable accident, if one may so speak, of the knowledge of Christ, that the Christian should present his body a living sacrifice to God. But not till the holy necessity of this conformity is felt by the believer, does he know what the extent of his own corruption is; for it is then that the conflict commences. The flesh rises in indignant violence against the stern purposes of the altered affections. Within are fightings, as the Apostle so truly

describes it: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." Whatever the nature of each man's peculiar liabilities, therefore, may be, it matters not. His besetting sin revolts from the curb of duty, and so fierce is the struggle, that victory is not unfrequently on the side of sin, as the Apostle continues to shew us, for he adds, "And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." How often we hear the Christian, in bitterness, complaining that his pride, or his lust, or his self-seeking, or his temper, or his levity, is apparently as strong and unsubdued as ever! And especially so when there has been any remission of watchfulness or prayer. Alas! dear friends, the heart here knoweth alone its own bitterness, for we have each of us probably some painful evil, the risings of which are known but to God and ourselves, but which serve to keep us in fear and sorrow. It is the first point to which our attention should be directed, to ascertain the character and number of our own constitutional sins, or in other words, to find out our weak side; for there we are sure that Satan will always make an assault, whenever we relax our watchfulness.

*But the convert will have another difficulty*

*in cultivating and maintaining communion with God.* This is the life of the religious life, and one, therefore, against which our natural habits and tastes act as a dead weight. It is, indeed, the best and loftiest attainment of the Christian, to delight in and relish spiritual meditations and prayer. We can pray for what we want, and when we are under the pressure of trial or of sin; but to feel our mind soaring into God, to know and enjoy God for Himself, to commune with Him over His Word, or in His works, this is a high, and proportionably a rare and difficult attainment. But, without going so far as this, the converted man will experience a great drawback in his own indolence and corruption, from anything like continued or frequent prayer. The Christian knows and feels its necessity, but how many things tend to make it irksome! How gladly we find excuses for shortening our exercise! The same may be said of the study of God's Word. And yet, if in anything our meetness for heaven must be commenced, it is in this article of communion with the Great and Sovereign JEHOVAH! Our whole spirituality of tone and character depends upon it.

Another difficulty presents itself, *in carrying out a consistency of walk.* Inconsistency,

more or less, marks every Christian, for who is there, at all moments, and under all circumstances, and in all places, that is mindful of his duty, or capable of self-restraint? And yet, Brethren, it is in this point that so much scandal and offence is caused to worldly persons or weak Christians. Nominal Christians are peculiarly watchful to see how true Christians speak and act, and it is in little things that they detect the believer's weakness, and find him to be but a sinful man. Such conclusions as are often drawn, are doubtless most unfair, but we must not give room for them. Thus, the Christian's inconsistency in his amusements, indulgences, temper, and deep and frequently made pretexts for declining a strict, or in fact, a real Christian walk. Nothing but the adoption and stern application of a religious principle in all our transactions, of whatever nature, will effect true Christian consistency, and it is in this that the difficulty consists. We want clearness, recollectedness, and firmness;—clearness of view, recollectedness of principle, and firmness of determination—to enable us to be thoroughly consistent; and so much of God's glory depends upon it, that we are solemnly enjoined to aim at it. But such self-denial is, *in point of fact*, the cross of Christian discipline,

and it is not till we have lost our own will, in the will of God, that we attain to it. And yet, who has lost himself in God on this side the grave? Lives there the man? No: *he* is no longer man who has arrived at this. Some such characters have flitted across the path of life, and have been speedily removed to a more congenial world.

But the young Christian will find a fourth difficulty in *maintaining a sense of his littleness and unworthiness*. St. Augustine was once asked, "What was the first thing for a Christian to aim at?" whereupon he answered, "Humility." Being asked then the second thing, he replied, "Humility." The meaning of which was, that there was no second virtue necessary. And, without doubt, humility is that tone of mind and heart which results from a perception and desire of the excellency of God, whereby the soul is carried away from itself, and fixed upon Him. In short, it is just the reverse of the principle of human corruption. Adam's sin consisted not in an act of disobedience, but in a withdrawal of dependence upon God. Independence of God was the lesson which Satan attempted, but too successfully, to instil into Adam's mind; and the restoration of man to favour with God, in its operation upon

himself, consists in the exercise of that very principle which Adam threw away; for faith is the perpetual discipline required of every believer; and evil is nothing else than objection to God's ways. To feel oneself to be nothing but sinfulness, and impotence, and ignorance, is essential to an entire dependence upon God, and a habit of soul which nothing but constant self-examination, and constant prayer, can preserve. But this, if not watched, will plunge the Christian into an opposite difficulty.

There is *such a perception of sin and weakness in ourselves as obscures the sufficiency and love of Christ*. We are not at any time disposed to rest calmly on Him, and much less so when we are deeply sensible of our own unworthiness. Minds of a certain caste, moreover, are peculiarly liable to the temptation of thinking themselves forsaken of God. But a calm persuasion of Christ's faithfulness and kindness, is essential to a solid progress in religious grace, and in spirituality. Backed by our inconsistencies, Satan is often but too successful in persuading the believer that he is not one of Christ's sheep; knowing, as he does, that a full persuasion of Christ's love is one of *those barriers against sin which is most successful in checking it*; for "the joy of the Lord

shall be your strength." Such are the leading difficulties of the Christian walk ; and I think all that are met with are reducible under some one of these heads. It is obvious that in a subject so extended as this, a rapid glance is all that we can bestow upon them ; but these may nevertheless be serviceable, as a sort of note to your own meditations.

II. I would proceed, then, in the second place, to point out the quarter from whence these difficulties rise. It is scarcely necessary for me to remark, that Scripture enumerates three subjects of duty, three sources of corruption, and three modes of sin. The subjects of duty are God, our neighbour, and ourselves. The sources of corruption are the devil, the world, and the flesh. The modes of sin are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ; or sensuality, covetousness, and pride. *In* the first lie our difficulties, *from* the second they arise, and *by* the third they exhibit themselves. The origin of our difficulties, then, is to be sought in these three grand enemies of human salvation,—the devil, the world, and the flesh. But what part would Satan or man have in us, if we were but true to ourselves ? Alas, Brethren, is it not to old *sins and temptations*, to old *habits of thought*,



to natural temperaments perverted, that we must go for our main difficulties and discouragements? Look at the list of sins which the Apostle warns the Colossians that they must contend with and mortify. Is it possible that a man can feel the risings and promptings of fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, or covetousness, without suffering pain and distress, fear and doubt, difficulty and discouragement? Are there any to be found entirely free from some inclination to the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life? No! no! Convents and nunneries cannot kill that which remains even in them that are regenerate. But besides this, it is contrary to all Scripture and experience, to suppose that men attain to a complete victory and mortification of sin at once. "Grow in grace," is our Apostle's motto; and what is growth but a gradual thing? and what is growth in grace but a gradual forcing back of the corruption which it defeats and finally quells?

We must expect, therefore, that our old sins and temptations will rise against us. They are our enemies, against whom we are pitched in deadly contest. "The spirit lusteth against *the flesh*." Lusts which we have formerly

indulged, tempers that we suffered to direct and move us, continue to agitate our hearts. The only difference between us and our former selves is, that we are like the authorities of a country in a state of rebellion, who have received a subsidy from a friendly power. We are able to overcome by dint of steady exertion, and we have the consolation of knowing that there is no doubt whatever of our success. Our force is sufficient to subdue the outbreaks, though it cannot, of course, put down the evil dispositions and intentions of the rebels. These rebels are the instruments by which Satan and the world assail us. Our ignorance, our unbelief of heart, our lusts, our pride, readily enter into co-operation with them, and rise upon the slightest remission of watchfulness and discipline. We are placed in the same difficulty by old habits of thought. It is a long time before habits of mind are broken down. We are perpetually looking at things through the old glasses, and receiving wrong impressions in consequence. How often do men condemn themselves for their ill judgment? Prejudices, false maxims, exaggerated conceptions, fancy put in the place of knowledge, these are some of the weights which give our bowl a bias, and force it to turn perpetually out of the straight.

line. What use, again, does Satan not make of these things? How often does a man find it hard to pronounce that to be evil which is not positively good, or to condemn characters which have all that is charming of the natural man, acted upon, moreover, in some degree by religion, but which are after all, to be classed among those that have not God set before them, and who, because they are highly esteemed among men, are abomination to God? And have we not a third source of difficulty in our own natural temperaments: these are perpetually leading us either into difficulty or discouragement. One man is complaining of his imagination, another of his animal spirits, another of his indolence, a fourth, of his irritability, a fifth, that he can find no comfort, that all is dark and gloom in his prospects, a sixth, that he is surprised into new sins. The truth is, my friends, that grace does not alter our natural and distinguishing constitutions, although it undoubtedly modifies their effects. Our temperaments are the distinctive characteristics of our souls, as the features are of our faces. A converted man, moreover, is brought into so many new associations and untried courses, that he can scarcely be said to have known his own nature till then. And it is not

unfrequently the case, that purely physical causes are found to be at the bottom of many an hour's bitterness and sorrow. It need not be added, that Satan is sure to avail himself of these instruments, in impeding, if not the course, at least the comfort of the believer. We need, in fact, a judgment in understanding ourselves and others, that we may persevere in our race with a holy thoughtfulness and assurance, and may be enabled to treat the weak with discrimination and tenderness.

But I must curtail the remarks which might be abundantly made upon this point, in order to offer you

III. Some practical suggestions on this subject. And, first, I would recommend you to endeavour always to act upon a religious principle. This should be the grand effort of every Christian, because it enables him to keep clear of false views and wrong steps. If we could resolve to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord in all our conversations, designs, actions, and courses, we should not only find ourselves furnished with a proper motive; but our character would become insensibly moulded into that high and holy simplicity which constitutes meetness for heaven. "God's will be done," would be the language of our affections

and life. And there is no greater difficulty in applying this maxim to our own government than in ruling ourselves by any other: for it must always require a certain amount of resolution to act upon any fixed principle. Another suggestion that I would offer is to endeavour to preserve an equableness of affection. You will see that this is an antidote to the effects which our natural temperaments are calculated to produce in us. But in order to attain this, two things are necessary; the first, that you should strive after a recollectedness of mind—a habit, that is, of mindfulness, which will prevent you from being taken off your guard or thrown off your balance by sudden emotions or temptations. By this means you will be enabled to preserve the sense of duty and of support at all times.

The second thing is that you should keep your desires and thoughts as spiritual as possible. If we let these go, we may be racing after every empty and foolish thing, and so get nothing for our pains but an unsettled heart and an uneasy conscience. But by observing these two things, we shall find ourselves kept in a quietness of frame very essential to that peace which ought to dwell in the believer's *heart*.

In the third place, you must always learn to look at persons and things in a spiritual way. To remember that we are moving as immortal souls among immortal souls in a world that is doomed to perish with the using, must of necessity chasten and subdue our tempers and habits. This is the only true and proper medium through which we ought to judge and decide upon persons and things.

In the next place, you must aim at a sternness of decision in regard to temptation and sin. That which is not right is wrong. That which is wrong is sin, and we must give sin no quarter. We must have no favourite lusts, no little failings spared.

And lastly, you must never give up prayer. Backslidings begin, says some one, at the closet. A praying Christian cannot remain in the same state for ever. There will always be some minutes in a day when his heart will imbibe a fresh amount of strength and resolution. Prayer, and the other means of grace, consequently must be the stronghold of your religious life. Whatever you do or do not—pray. Keep as much as possible before you the reality of God's mercy-seat by frequently going to it, and so the impressions of evil will

be continually meeting with a counteracting influence that must finally overcome all.

Thus, Brethren, I have endeavoured to present you with a general outline of the difficulties and discouragements of the Christian life. But what are they after all? Are they not the very evidences of the work of the Spirit? Is not the state of conflict more attended with consolation than that of ease and quiet? But let it be borne in mind that not conflict alone is the sign of grace. Conflict without victory is misery without hope. Victory alone is the proper evidence of vital grace. Still we may not be discouraged at the strivings of our hearts. They are an evidence of a work, so that difficulty in the religious life is truly a matter of rejoicing, and so far from discouraging us, should quicken us with the idea that we have a warfare to wage, and a prize to gain, and eyes that are looking on whose approbation will be the sweetest thing that the created thing can receive.

But, let us not part without one word to the sinner. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Alas! it is a fearful alternative this, you that know nothing of the struggle which attends on the believer's life. What are you doing?

Is it, indeed, that God's children are to have the battle and you the spoil? Do the palm branches that the redeemed carry intimate the calmness and facilities of their earthly career? The righteous are saved with labour. Their path is one of continued self-denial which habit alone renders sweet or easy. Where then shall you appear, who have gone on in ease and enjoyment with the smiles of the world, and the gratification of your tastes and desires? The righteous have come out of great tribulation, and you enter it. The righteous are saved, and you are lost. Learn, ere it be too late, that palms belong to victors, and prizes to them that win, that the conqueror's throne is for the conqueror, and rewards are for them that have passed the trial, and that the kingdom of heaven is inherited only by them that take it by force.





# LECTURE V.

BY THE

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## THE RELIGIOUS LIFE,

ITS AIDS AND ENJOYMENTS.

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GENESIS, v. 24.

—“*Enoch walked with God.*”—

SUCH is the Bible phrase for a religious life. Of this life we are now to consider the AIDS and ENJOYMENTS; its *difficulties* and *discouragements* having been already brought before you. And our present subject, like the last, is one connected so exclusively with the experience of the believer, as to demand emphatically an experimental Sermon, and an experienced congregation. It is a subject which sends the preacher, not to his books, but to his heart; not to systems of theology, to expositors and commentators, but to the life of God within his own soul, and the souls of his fellow-believers; a subject with which he cannot hope to interest any hearer, nor to make himself, in every point of it, intelligible to any, who is yet in the

death of sin, and not quickened to the life of righteousness; who yet walks, not with God, but "according to the course of this present evil world." And the two subjects together make up the volume of the experience of the believer, who, having been roused from *indifference* to *conviction*, and led from *conviction* to *conversion*, is trained by *grace* for *glory*. Every page of that book, the history of the soul's inner life, is crowded with this mingled record—the believer's *Difficulties* and *Discouragements*, his *Aids* and *Enjoyments*. It is the brighter portion of that record which is now to engage us.

You will not anticipate, beloved Brethren, that I am about to pursue the consideration of our text in connection with the history and character of the patriarch Enoch. Nor while selecting our text from the history of an *Old* Testament patriarch, shall I confine myself to those aids and enjoyments which were vouchsafed to the early saints of God, but embrace the fuller privileges and richer blessings of the believer in Christ Jesus, to whom has been vouchsafed the "better covenant."

And may the Lord the Spirit so bless the poor, weak, words of preaching, as that His people here present may at this time be aided

and refreshed by the truths spoken ; and the spiritually dead among us, who as yet are strangers to this life, be quickened by the life-giving power of His grace !

We are then to consider

I. *The AIDs or ASSISTANCES of the Divine life.*

II. *The ENJOYMENTS of it.*

In entering upon the consideration of our *first* point—the *Aids or Assistances of the Divine life*—it will be needful for us to advert to the *source* of this life within the believer's soul. The vital principle within the regenerate and converted heart is *Divine*. By Divine grace operating upon it, infused into it, is this life *imparted*. And by the same grace continually indwelling is it *maintained*, amid all its inward and outward conflicts, its difficulties, discouragements, and dangers. This grace, as it is originally bestowed of God the Father, working by His Spirit, through Christ Jesus, so from the same Father, by the same Spirit, through the same Christ Jesus, is it vouchsafed continually. By a living, real, (though spiritual and mystic) union with Christ, is it that the believer is first made to partake this spiritual life, because through this union is this Spirit's grace derived to him ; and by the maintenance

of this union, by abiding in Him, by the mutual dwelling of the believer in Christ, and Christ in him, is his spiritual life maintained.

And it is most important that these great truths be laid down clearly at the very outset of our subject. Because we shall thus perceive that, as in the original impartation, so in the after maintenance and perfecting, of the believer's spiritual life; in his establishment, deliverance, and protection; amid every danger and difficulty, and in his every necessity—whether he need the aid of sanctifying, or restraining, or defensive, or illuminating, or establishing, or perfecting, grace, the very fulness of the Godhead, of the Three Divine Persons—God his Father, God his Saviour, God his Sanctifier—is brought to bear, if I may so speak, upon the great work of his sanctification and salvation. Hence we find that throughout the Word of God this work is continually traced up directly to the grace of God the Father. His power it is, exercised through His Spirit; His Spirit given through His Son Christ Jesus; which strengthens, upholds, and perfects His people. David sings of Him as the Lord his "strength," his "fortress," his "high tower," his "deliverer," and his "shield." "He giveth power," says Isaiah, "to the faint; and to them

that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”\* And this strength is derived, I have said, through Christ Jesus—“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. . . . . Without me ye can do nothing.”† And again, to cite but one or two from numerous passages, mark the language of St. Paul’s prayers for those several flocks whose growth, establishment, and prosperity, he so earnestly and affectionately desired: for the Ephesians, (iii. 14, &c.) “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” For the Colossians, (chap. i.) when he has declared to them that he does “not cease to pray for” them that they “might

\* Isaiah, xl. 29—31.

† John, xv. 4, 5.



walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," he adds,—“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.” And to the Philippians, (chap. iv. 13.) “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Such passages might be adduced in abundance; these are but a specimen. And in these and many others, the origin and maintenance of the life of grace within the believer’s soul is directly traced to God. He is the supply, the helper, and preserver, of His saints, in their every want, and weakness, and danger.

And while God the Father, working by and with His Spirit and His Son, is thus continually set before us as the sovereign and supreme *source* of grace, *the very offices assigned to Christ and to the Spirit* in the covenant of grace are such as to assure the believer that they are engaged in his behalf. In what light, and under what character, in what office, is the weak and tempted believer now to regard his ascended and glorified Lord, in His session of glorious majesty on high? He sustains offices and performs a work even there, which are intimately, and in a manner the most encouraging and affecting,

connected with His people's warfare below. And with the eagle eye of faith may each weak and trembling soldier of His cross, in his hour of pressing need, in the moment of hottest conflict, look up, with the martyr-deacon of old, and behold his Almighty and all-sympathizing High Priest engaged in his behalf, standing ready to succour him. Therefore, urges the Apostle, because "we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities . . . . . let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." As he had before argued, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."\*

The sympathy then of his exalted and gracious Redeemer, sustaining at the right hand of God the office of his High Priest, assures the believer of grace to aid in every necessity and extremity. Nor is the bearing of one branch of this His priestly office upon His people's safety less important and encouraging. As their High Priest, He *intercedes* for them, and since "He ever liveth" to do this, is able to save them "to the uttermost." For the

\* Hebrews, iv. 15, 16.; ii. 18.

present, perpetual, advocacy of Christ with the Father includes not only the guilt continually incurred by His people, but their trials and dangers. And, oh! it is a heart-affecting and heart-sustaining thought that, as with Peter, so with His every saint—so, Brethren, with *you* and *me*, if we be His people—ere the onset of the evil one is made, while his subtle snares are being plotted and planned against our souls, the omniscient eye of our Divine Intercessor has discerned his every purpose, is marking his every assault; that His all gracious heart has poured forth for us intercessions which can never be in vain. It is yours, Brethren, and it is mine—that blessed assurance—“*I have prayed for THEE!*” As with our bodies, throughout the hours of unconscious sleep, there is ever open over us the unslumbering eye of our heavenly Father, so, ere we are conscious of the tempter’s machinations, or feel his onsets, or discern even his approach, already have we been helped by the preventing efficacy of the intercession of Jesus. To Him, as our sympathizing High Priest, may we betake ourselves in our every hour of need; His heart is full of tenderness, His grace sufficient. We may return from the mercy-seat “*marvellously helped,*” and in weakness “*made strong,*”

because His power resteth upon us. As our High Priest, He hears and presents our prayers; but, no less, Himself intercedeth for us.

Nor are the offices sustained by the Third Person in the ever-blessed Godhead—the Holy Spirit—in the Gospel covenant of grace, less intimately connected with our subject, or less calculated to cheer and sustain us in our conflicts. He is our *Guide* into truth, to lead us “into all truth,” to reveal to us “the deep things of God,” “the things freely given us of God;” He is our *Sanctifier*, to carry on the work of renewal, to produce and foster in us every heavenly fruit; He is our *Comforter* in tribulation; our indwelling Intercessor, to help us when in our infirmity we know not what to “pray for as we ought.” And thus is each Divine Person in the blessed and glorious Godhead revealed to us in such a light, as standing to us in such relations and sustaining such offices, as that the very “fulness of God” is ours. For what is involved in the very idea of each Divine Person sustaining offices in a covenant of grace for man, but that this fulness is the source and the supply of the believer? The help of Omnipotence is ours—ours is a supply inexhaustible, a refuge sure, a defence unfailing, because “the God of ALL grace” is All in all!

*Such, oh! ye that are His children, such is*

the assurance of every needful help derived to you from the consideration of the source and principle of the Divine life within you. The source is *God*; the principle is *Divine*. God then is your Helper and Defender, your Guardian and your Strength. Your help is from above—from a covenant Father, a covenant Saviour, a covenant Sanctifier. Here is strength for “them that have no might;” here is strength for the weakest babe in Christ; here alone the strength of the strong believer.

Your necessity is great, perhaps at this time urgent. What aid is it that you need? Is the Divine life waning within you? Are there symptoms of spiritual disease? He can strengthen; He can heal. Is faith weak? He can increase it. Is your soul grovelling on earth, cleaving to the dust, burdened by life’s care, ensnared by its vanities? He can quicken it. Is Satan buffeting? Are his darts very “fiery” at this moment? “My grace is sufficient for thee.” He will “bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Is your heavenly Father’s hand trying you by some extremity of perplexity or necessity? Do you need help in the deep waters of a calamity which are now ready to overwhelm you? Or do you need patience to wait “*the Lord’s leisure*,” and trustingly to abide the

issue of some dispensation which is now dark ?  
“I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”\* Away with arms of flesh—lift up your eyes to the heavenly “hills from whence cometh your help.” Your “help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.” Let your sense of self’s powerlessness and emptiness be entire—come, cast yourself as a worm upon Omnipotence! Look upward and behold in Him before whom the angels of heaven are casting down their crowns, to whom has been committed “all power in heaven and in earth”—your sympathizing High Priest, your gracious and all-prevailing Intercessor. Your name, once a name of shame and sin, is written in His heart and graven in His hands. Amid all your dangers, in your every want, your every conflict, He is with you. He has prayed for you this day. Haply at this moment, could your eye pierce the heaven of heavens, your ear catch His voice of love, your own name would be heard, and you should know that Jesus at this moment is praying for thee. Onward speed thee

\* Isaiah, xli. 13, 14.

in the race! to the conflict with no coward heart! "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."

We have thus far regarded *the aids of the Divine life* in connection with their *source*, and have seen that this source is the same with that from which this life itself is derived—"THE GOD OF ALL GRACE." And, further, that while God the Father is presented to us, in the Gospel covenant, as the supreme and sovereign source, each Person in the Godhead is revealed to us as sustaining offices for the helping and perfecting of the believer.

But while God himself is the Source, Himself has appointed *channels of communication* with His people's souls. We proceed therefore to advert, though very briefly and cursorily, to THE MEANS OF GRACE, as occupying an important place in *the assistances of the Divine life*.

I say "*briefly and cursorily*," because each means of grace were in itself an ample theme for a course of Sermons, while here they come before us as but one point of a wide subject. I need hardly enumerate these means—*Prayer*, in its various branches, private, public, domestic, social—the *Word of God*, both read and preached—the *Sabbath*—the *Christian Ministry*—the *Sacrament of Christ's body and blood*.

*And in reference to these it is important*

to remark that the tendency of mankind is either on the one hand to *overrate*, or, on the other, to *underrate* them. Our faith in them must rest upon the fact that they are *God's* appointed means, not in any fancied inherent efficacy in the means themselves. They must be diligently, humbly, spiritually, used by all who would thrive in the Divine life; neither is to be neglected; neither can be neglected without hindrance to the health and vigour and growth of that life. And it must suffice for us that they are God's appointed means of aid. We are to use them obediently, because they are His appointment; and thus using them we may not doubt that He will make them the channels of grace and blessing. And, since Himself is the alone Source of life and grace, and these but His appointed means of communicating grace to His people's souls, and this grace is communicated only through Christ Jesus, let it never be lost sight of, that no means, none singly, not all in their combination, can be efficacious, but as bringing the believer into nearer, closer, union with Christ. This is the grand point toward which they all converge, and in which they are all concentrated. In exact proportion as they strengthen this, do they aid the believer in spiritual life and health and growth.



And if I would prove that when thus diligently and spiritually used, they are effectual helps, may not my evidence be an appeal to the experience of many here? PRAYER—an aid how mighty! how wondrous! how blessed!

“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.

“While Moses stood with arms spread wide,  
Success was found on Israel's side;  
But when through weariness they failed,  
That moment Amalek prevailed.”

If prayer have power with God; if by prayer it is that His promises invite us to draw upon His fulness; prayer must help the believer in every danger and in every need, because by prayer he casts himself upon the help of God.

I may not dwell upon the blessed services of the *household altar* which refresh our spirits as we enter upon the day's duties and trials, as we review them at its close; nor upon the blessed communion of the *social circle*, when the saints hallow their meetings by acts of prayer and praise. The *Public Worship of the Sanctuary* is wonderfully adapted, in its very character, to the laws and sympathies of our nature. And often when the Christian's own *heart is dull and drooping*, his spiritual joy

waning, his harp upon the willows, the united worship of the great congregation, the fellowship of prayer and praise, which is then his privilege, has at once strengthened and cheered his spirits.

And how great and important the instrumentality of the WORD OF GOD! So great, even in one respect alone,—its “exceeding great and precious promises”—that did our limits permit, they demand a lengthened consideration. Those promises so minute, so comprehensive, so universal, so glorious—extending from our daily bread to an eternity of glory; descending to the very hairs of our head, and rising to all the momentous interests of our immortal souls! What balm, what oil of consolation, what strength, is here for the child of God in his every need! Here is his treasury of riches inexhaustible!

And not only thus are these “statutes” the heaven-bound traveller’s “songs in the house of his pilgrimage,” but the same word is “the sword of the Spirit” in his, as it was in his Captain’s hand. To him is it a lamp, a light, a counsellor—him too can it make “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;” his guide to truth, his sure test of error.

And the SABBATH with its sacred pause—

that flower of Eden blooming in the wilderness of a fallen world—how foremost an aid to the believer, a safeguard against the engrossing encroachments of earth and sense, a pause in life's hurried journey, a hush in life's din and tumult.

And the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY—to sinners, “the ministry of reconciliation,” but ordained and perpetuated no less “for the perfecting of the saints,” the edifying of Christ's body—to this does the God of grace, in the case of many of His people, give a prominent efficacy as an aid in their spiritual life and growth. Many, I believe, of His true people find their Sunday's Sermons or their week-day Lecture to be strengthening food for their journey; a word in season for their correction, instruction, comforting, or establishing.

And the SACRAMENTAL FEAST of His redeeming love has been ordained of Christ, not only as the memorial “of His precious death and passion,” and in token of His Church's faith in “His coming again,” but “for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls.” To believing, spiritual, communicants, He designs this sacrament as a means of union with Himself. And they, not by the miraculous transubstantiation of the elements, as Papists teach; not by any

consubstantiation of His actual body and blood with them; but in a heavenly and spiritual manner, are fed by the spiritual sustenance of His body and blood. A sacrament to be partaken of by the weakest and most unworthy of His saints, but not by the dead formalist, the carnal worldling, or the halting professor—a sacrament not to be exalted above the other means of grace, or regarded as of necessarily inherent efficacy, or received by the dying sinner as a passport to heaven—but a sure channel of grace, a sure means of the spiritual partaking of His body and blood to His believing people.

With this brief reference to the means of grace, I must content myself lest our limits be exhausted by the one portion of our appointed subject. I proceed

II. To the ENJOYMENTS OF THE DIVINE LIFE. For the believer, as he has conflicts, trials, and sorrows, so also has he joys, peculiar to him as a believer, and flowing from the Divine life within him. And a multitude of passages might be cited to shew, that he is called on to rejoice in the Lord. “Rejoice evermore,” writes St. Paul—“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say rejoice.”

But ere we proceed to touch in detail upon the several enjoyments of the Divine life, I would guard carefully against the risk of discouraging

any young believers, any "babes in Christ," whom I may be addressing. Let none such imagine that the personal experience of these enjoyments constantly, and in full measure, is so universal and necessary a characteristic of Christ's people, as that you must conclude yourselves not of that number, because you cannot now declare that your experience furnishes the counterpart of all that I am about to urge. The case is very different with different Christians. Nor do the ripest saints at all times, realize these enjoyments, and walk Zionward with joy in their heart, and songs upon their tongues. With some, seasons of despondency predominate; with others, seasons of refreshment and joy; some walk well nigh always in the sunshine, others as in a "dark and cloudy day." Our *graces*, not our *enjoyments*, are the surest tests of our Divine sonship, and of the reality of the Divine life within us.

*First*, then, I would particularize *peace with God*—that peace which springs from the acceptance of His message of reconciliation in Christ Jesus:—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."\* The blood of Christ being sprinkled on the conscience, the heavy burden of guilt is removed; while the Spirit of Christ

\* Romans, v. 1.

within the heart destroys the heart's natural enmity toward God. This blessing is a foremost one in the Apostolic benedictions, "Grace, mercy, and peace." This was the Redeemer's own bequest to His people, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."\* And this peace is presented to us by St. Paul in the familiar benediction of Philippians iv. not only as an enjoyment, but as an *aid* of the Divine life; for he writes, "The peace of God *shall keep* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"—shall protect and defend them; as is proved in the sustaining and defensive power of this peace in the believer's heart, amid life's sorrows, and cares, and conflicts. And it is declared to pass "all understanding." Yes, to look up to God and feel that He is a reconciled Father—to look back upon sin's overwhelming burden, and know and feel that it is removed—to know that there is "no condemnation" for us, that the law's penalty is paid, its claims fully satisfied—that God loves us and we love God—this is *Christian* peace, distinct alike from the self-complacent peace of the self-justiciary, the empty peace of the spiritually ignorant, the awful peace of the reckless and the stout hearted. This is *God's* peace, peace for living, peace for dying, peace whose foundation

\* John, xiv. 27.

is the "Rock of ages," peace which sustains and calms the spirit when all else in this sorrowing world were vexation and bitterness.

But, *secondly*, and in close connection with this, the child of God enjoys often that which is emphatically termed in Scripture, *the light of God's countenance*. In this does he walk; this is soul-sunshine. Thus ran the Aaronic benediction: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee." . . . "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee."\* . . . Thus ran the Psalmist's petition: "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant." "There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Again, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."† How affectingly and expressively does this image set forth to us the enjoyment intended by it! We know how cheerily the sun lights up the fair face of the smiling landscape; how the sun-lit scene with its hills and plains, its valleys and its streams, contrasts with the face of nature, when wrapped in winter's gloom on midnight darkness. And blessed is the season when God causes His face to shine upon the believer's soul, and lifts up the light of His countenance upon it! When, *amid the changes and crosses of this toilsome*  
*umbers, vi. 22—27. + Psalms, cxix. 135; iv. 6; lxxxix. 15.*

wilderness, and even in an hour when earthly sorrows would press heavily upon his soul, and the path before his feet is full of briers and thorns, the child of God can look upward and behold the face of God as the face of a reconciled Father, beaming full in smiles of love upon his soul. Blessed is the season of prayer, when amid the secrecy and silence of the closet, the believer on his knees, and with the promises before him on the Bible's page, can realize this, and hold communion as with a Father, and pour his wants as into a Father's ear! Such seasons, though from beds of sickness, do God's saints enjoy; and they walk before Him, and they look up to Him as realizing their acceptance and adoption in Christ Jesus.

But again, and *thirdly*, they enjoy "*the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*" Such is the simple picture of the early churches at one season of their history—they walked "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."\* "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."† "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."‡ This, indeed, like all the other operations of the Holy Ghost within the

\* Acts, ix. 31.    † Psalm, xciv. 19.    ‡ Romans, xv. 13.



soul of man, is deep and full of mystery. But, nevertheless, "the kingdom of God" within the heart is often realized by the saint to be "righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." As "the spirit of adoption"—by that inward witness of which Paul writes to the Romans, and by the direct performance of His work as the Comforter—by opening up the promises—by taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them to the soul—does He maintain a heavenly peace, and comfort, and joy within, by the abundant "consolations of God."

And *fourthly*—"In keeping" of God's covenants "there is great reward." Observe, "in keeping." In other words, holiness is happiness. The Gospel blessing is not simply the forgiveness of iniquities—that were but a *half* blessing, a *half* salvation. The Gospel delivers man from his wretchedness, by delivering him not only from the *guilt*, but the *power* of sin. God "sent His Son to *bless*" us, "*by turning*" us "*away from* our iniquities."\* And though the believer's sanctification, and his keeping of God's covenants involves a sore spiritual conflict, yet, in proportion as he overcomes, does he find God's service "perfect freedom." There is a remarkable expression in the history of

\* Acts, iii. 26.

Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. xvii. 6.) “His heart *was lifted up* (or, *encouraged*) in the ways of the Lord.” From Psalm cxix. we may quote almost at random :—“ I will delight myself in thy courts, which I have loved ”—“ Thy testimonies have I taken for ever : for they are the rejoicing of my heart.” And which of us but must attest the truth, that in proportion as we have grown in grace, subdued the fever of sin’s tempers, and lusts, and passions within us, we have known joy and peace ?

The *fifth* enjoyment I would do no more than name—his *enjoyment of the means of grace*—because those means have been already adverted to under the former division of our subject. But while we remember that these are *aids*, they are also, in their use, among the most prominent and constant of his *enjoyments*. The hour of closet prayer is a sweet hour—the tabernacles of God’s house amiable to him, as to David—the Word, in its precepts and its promises, sweet—the sound of the preached Gospel gladsome—the Sabbath not only a needful, but a *grateful*, pause ; and sometimes an antepast, as it is a pledge, of his eternal rest—the Lord’s supper, as a feast in the wilderness, meat and drink indeed.

But, though only to be touched on, *Christian Intercourse* with his fellow-saints must not be

omitted among the Christian's enjoyments. How beautiful is the expression of the Psalmist—"We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends."\* And the season is alike profitable and delightful when Christians thus enjoy their fellowship; when their speech is of what God hath done for them, when they compare experience with experience; exercise mutual sympathy, and speak of the things whereby one may edify and exhort another; when a common Saviour, common hopes, common sorrows, common mercies, a common Gospel, and a common heaven, are their theme.

Lastly, the believer enjoys *the hope of glory*. We stand in grace, "and rejoice," writes St. Paul, "in hope of the glory of God."† And this joy St. Peter declares to be of marvellous power, amid the present sorrows of the pilgrimage—"Wherein" (*i. e.* in a lively hope of the inheritance "reserved in heaven" for them) "ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."‡ Yes, beloved, the Christian's soul is anchored, amid the swellings and tossings of life's storms, "within

\* *Psalm*, *lv.* 14.    † *Romans*, *v.* 2.    ‡ *1 Peter*, *i.* 6, 8.

the vail." And while here the manifold sorrows of earth must often grieve his heart, and fill his eyes with tears, there is before him an "eternal weight of glory," in comparison of which earth's heaviest sorrow is light, its longest affliction, but for a moment. There no bereavement shall tear dear ties asunder, no sickness rack or exhaust his frame, no remnant of the curse be found.

"There happier bowers than Eden's bloom,  
Nor sin, nor sorrow know :  
Blessed seats ! through rude and stormy scenes,  
I onward press to you."

Yes—it is joy unspeakable to look onward to a coming eternity, as an eternity full of glory ; to know that when the angel's trump of doom shall peal its blast as the signal for the last fires to kindle upon this earth, and as the death knell of the heavens and all their host—that when the array of judgment is set, and the Son of Man cometh in His glory, with the pomp of Deity—that in that day we shall find mercy of Him ; nor find mercy only, but be partakers of His glory !

Our theme to night has been a high, a blessed, one—the aids and enjoyments of the Divine life. And there is not an immortal being—a man, a woman, or a child, before my

eyes or within sound of my voice, to whom these aids and enjoyments are not free, through the gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. But there are those here who have as yet secured to themselves no part nor lot in them. For I am preaching to the living and the dead—the “dead in trespasses and sins,” the dead to God. Whose conscience then this night, tells him that he knows nothing experimentally of what has now been urged?—nothing of peace with God, of living in the sunlight of God’s countenance, of the comfort of the Holy Ghost, of the joy of holiness, of the spiritual enjoyment of privileges, of Christian fellowship, of the hope of glory? I have preached of these things not for those who know them only—but for you, Men and Brethren, who know them not. And I have preached to you, and those who have preceded me in these Lectures have preached to you, not that we might gratify your taste, or instruct your intellects, or pass away a spare evening in the week, but that we may press upon you with all solemn, but affectionate, earnestness, the great concerns of your immortal souls. A mere passing excitement is not the object of these Lectures; still less a comparison of preacher with preacher. It is of little moment what you think of our gifts, of our manner, or

our delivery. Eternity, pregnant with heaven's everlasting glories and hell's unutterable pains, hangs upon your reception or rejection of our message ; upon your possessing or lacking the Divine life of which we speak. I am not preaching as to an auditory of critics—I stand not here that I may gain the admiration or applause of a congregation, but as a dying man to dying men. And the question is not which of a course of Six Sermons you like best or admire most, but which has sunk into your conscience and brought you to your knees. You have heard of religious indifference—are *you* yet indifferent? of conviction—are *you* unconvinced of sin? of conversion—are *you* unconverted? of the Divine life—are you alive to God, or spiritually dead in all but name? Look to yourselves, lest spiritual death here issue in “*the second death*” hereafter! Awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead! Oh! for a trumpet-tongued alarm in every careless sinner's ear—an alarm of a soul in danger—of a God neglected—of a Saviour despised—of an eternity ready to burst upon your soul—of the Judge on His way—of a kindling hell!

Nor would we alarm the careless sinner alone. There may be among us, for oh! how many there are to be found! who have the name to live

this Divine life, while yet they are dead—lifeless professors, worldly minded, formal Christians! Beloved, if I speak to such, mistake nothing, I implore you, for the reality of the Divine life within your souls. The life of which I have spoken this night is not mere baptism or profession, or Church-going, but a real, mighty, work of the Spirit of the living God within the soul; a work uniting the sinner to the Lord Jesus, turning him from sin to holiness, from Satan unto God. And without it, never, never shall you enter heaven. Oh! then, see to it that your Christianity be nothing short of this. Think not that I am talking harshly or wildly, but go home to search your heart and your Bible—go home to pray. All of which I have spoken may be yours in Christ. In Christ's name do I solemnly this night proffer to you the aids and enjoyments of the Divine life—grace and glory. Yes—to *you* individually, all Christ died to purchase, all Christ liveth to bestow. Receive not His grace in vain—but turn from “the course of this world,” in which you are now walking under the bondage of this world's prince, “fulfilling the desires of” your “flesh and of” your “mind,” and walk, as did Enoch, “with God,” aided by His grace here—the enjoyment of Him your eternal heaven!

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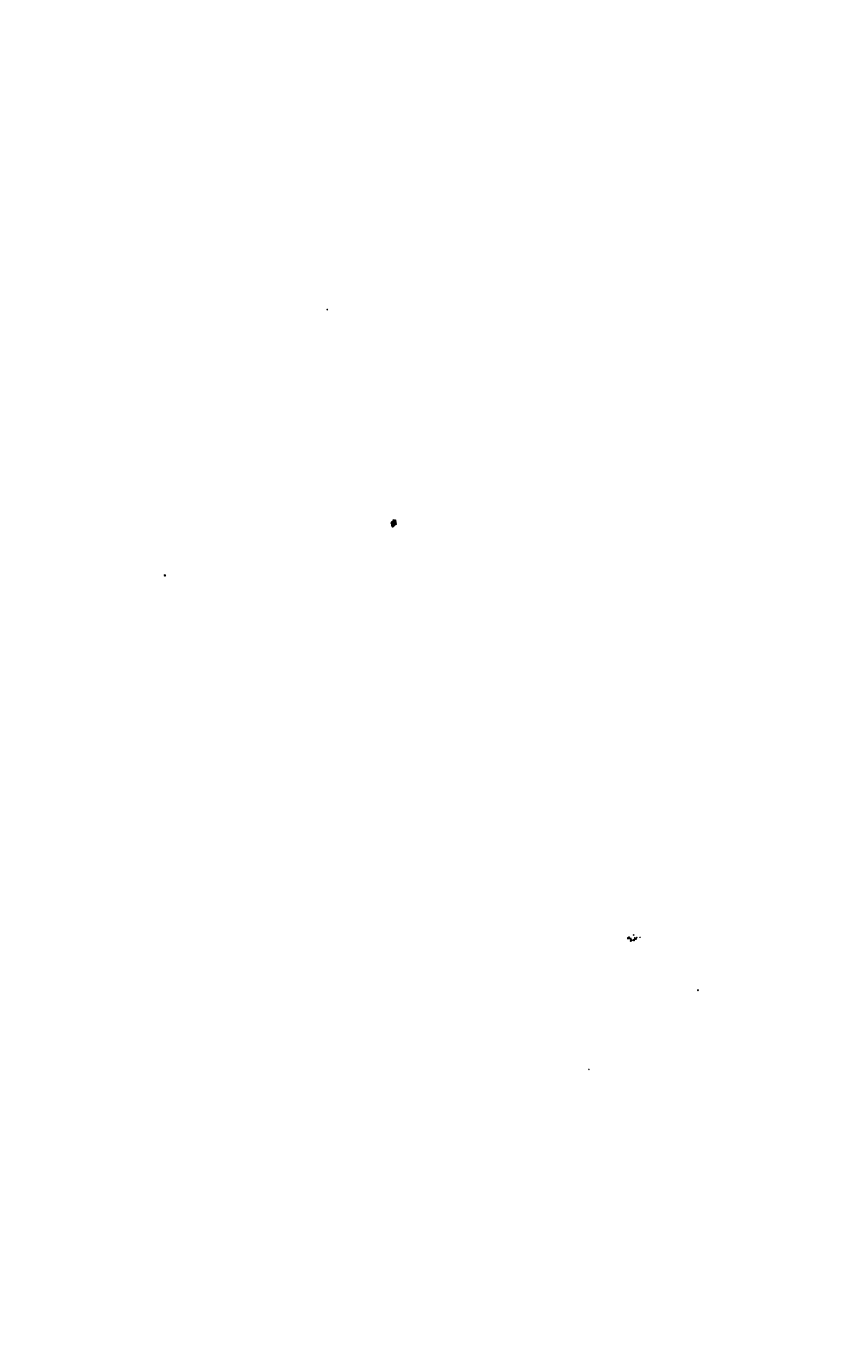
## LECTURE VI.

BY THE

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# THE END OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE,

IN DEATH AND GLORY.

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1 THESSALONIANS, iv. LATTER PART OF 14TH VERSE.

*“Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”*

THE End of a Religious Life, in Death and in Glory, is the subject proposed for our discourse this evening. And the words which have just been read seem to present that subject completely to our minds. For they describe what it is for a Christian man to die: it is to sleep in Jesus. And they promise what shall be his final blessedness: even to be brought together with Jesus at His coming and kingdom.

Let us, then, proceed without further preface to our consideration of these two most comforting and animating topics. And God of His mercy grant that each one of us may have in due time the actual experience of them.

I. Then we remark upon the description given in our text of the Christian's death. It is a sleeping in Jesus.

Now this representation of death, as a falling asleep, is exceedingly frequent in Holy Scripture. We meet with it as well in the Old Testament as in the New. "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers," said Jehovah to Moses, when foretelling his departure. "Some are fallen asleep," is the language of St. Paul, when alluding to the removal of certain of our Lord's first disciples.

And to a great extent the expression seems to be used specially in reference to the state in which the body of man is laid by death. Thus the Prophet Daniel speaks of those who "*sleep in the dust of the earth.*" When it is said of David that "he fell on sleep," it is added immediately, "*and saw corruption.*" And St. Paul, when he speaks of the saints who will be alive on the earth when the Saviour comes in the last day, tells us that they "shall not *sleep*, but shall be *changed.*" These, as well as many other like passages, seem to point more particularly to the state of the body, when they designate death as a sleep.

Nevertheless, we should not be right in concluding that nothing else is signified. Indeed,

from what we are taught elsewhere concerning the state of the soul of a believer after death, we seem warranted to think that that also is intended under this image of sleep. Not that it is a state of unconsciousness or of insensibility; but because it is certainly a state of most sweet repose.

“I heard,” saith St. John, in Revelation xiv. “a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.” They rest. But what is that rest? Is it the resting of the body only? It is not the body merely that has its labours. The soul has assuredly had her portion. If, then, we speak of resting from labours, inasmuch as those labours belong not to the body only, but to the soul also, we must certainly think that the rest is not merely for the body, but for the soul likewise. And the image of sleep, therefore, may in this view be understood as referring, in the case of all believers in Christ, not only to the resting of the flesh in the grave, but to the repose of the spirit in that abode of peace to which it passes when it leaves this world.

To sleep in Jesus, therefore, we may take as an emphatic and comprehensive expression

of what it is for a Christian to die: inasmuch as then both in body and soul he exchanges a state, which, more or less, is always one of labour and of sorrow, for perfect quietude and endless peace.

Here then, Christian Brethren, let us learn how to frame our thoughts of dying. And especially let us note one beautiful peculiarity in the expression of our text. The Apostle does not merely speak of sleeping, but of sleeping "*in Jesus.*" "In Jesus?" Yes: for whoever are Christ's, whether they live or whether they die, they still are in Him. Their bodies are His. Their souls are His. So long as those bodies and souls live united together in this world, both are Christ's: Christ's possession and property: the purchase of His precious blood: sealed and sanctified for Him by His own indwelling Spirit. And when by death body and soul are parted, still are they each, each in its separate state, His possession still. He takes charge of both. He watches over the *dust* of every saint: and He takes the *spirit* under His own protection. So that in death, as well as in life, He keeps His people in connection with Himself. They are still in Him. As St. Paul elsewhere speaks of them, "They are fallen asleep in Christ."

We repeat it, dear Brethren, you who know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, learn thus how to think of dying.

1. Your *bodies* then shall rest. Toil, fatigue, infirmity, and pain, shall cease, and cease for ever. The weary limb, the aching head, the languid eye, the trembling nerve, the diseased and tortured frame, shall be no more. All such sorrows shall be past and gone for ever. The flesh that suffered here shall be capable of suffering no longer. Sensation itself shall be suspended. All shall be still.

But yet this sleeping flesh is not forgotten in its rest. Forgotten of itself indeed it is, but not forgotten of Him who has redeemed it, and who purposes to raise it again at the last day. No: the body sleeps *in Jesus*. Committed though it be, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and obliterated from the sight of man, there is an eye which traces the seed thus sown in corruption; traces it through all the changes under which it is destined to pass; traces the essential part of that precious matter however decomposed or transmuted, in order to fulfil His own engagement concerning it, and to raise it again in incorruption.

The body, therefore, lies in its state of dissolution, dissolution not annihilation, under the

omniscient guardianship of its almighty Redeemer. And if so, then, Christian Brethren, however we may grant that this mortal frame is beyond all measure the lesser and inferior part of your nature, still since Christ your Lord is pleased so to regard it as to give it a share in His eternal redemption, shall it be no joy to you to reflect for yourselves, and shall it yield you no comforting thought as to others whom you have loved, and who are among the "dead in Christ," that your flesh and theirs, when death shall lay that flesh in dust, sleeps in Jesus? For He has charged Himself with such remembrance of it, that in the day of His appearing He shall reproduce it; its slumber shall be terminated; and that which was accounted dead shall be beheld alive again; that which was lost shall be found.

2. But we said that the state whereinto the *soul* of the believer passes after death, is also one that answers most truly and most blessedly, to the expression of sleeping in Jesus.

For if sleep implies repose, then, most assuredly, is it the fit image of that condition of calm and undisturbed felicity, which awaits the spirits of departing saints. "Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord." In one instant they pass from this scene of care

and frequent sorrow, this world of temptation and trial, to the Paradise of God. They "depart to be with Christ." It is sleeping in Jesus, for it is repose in His presence, it is peace in communion and fellowship with Him.

By some persons, we are aware, it has been surmised that the time which elapses between death and the resurrection is to be passed in an insensate, unconscious state of inactivity; that during all this period the soul will have no perception of her own state; and that all which is meant by being with Christ, and present with the Lord, is no more than this, that the Lord will watch over the soul as He does over the body, and keep that soul in safety, abiding under His care and protection.

This idea of sleeping in Jesus we cannot accept. And St. Paul, in this same Epistle, (chap. v. 10,) uses language which appears altogether at variance with such a notion. He declares how "Christ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Whether we wake or sleep, that is to say, whether we live or die, we yet exist with Christ; so long as we are here in this world, walking with Him by faith; and when taken hence, realizing in our souls His presence. Surely the Apostle must mean this, because if




here to live with Christ, is to have conscious fellowship with Him, certainly if when we die we are still to live with Him, we cannot lose the consciousness of our connection. In like manner we should reason from St. Paul's language (in Philippians i.) when he tells how he was "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ;" yet, at the same time, having a deep and ardent interest in the preaching of the Gospel upon earth, "What I shall choose," said he, "I wot not." But, surely he would never have weighed or pondered this question at all, had he known that after death he was to fall into a state of insensible indolence. For then assuredly he would have felt that it was better *not* to die? Far better surely, to live and be doing good, than to die, and become a mere senseless, unthinking, inactive being! Beside which, when our Lord promised to the repenting malefactor, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," His words certainly teach that a disembodied soul is no unconscious or insensible creature: otherwise would not such a promise have been altogether a mockery?

We conclude, then, on these, as well as other grounds, that the sleeping in Jesus which awaits a departing spirit, is no condition of

brute, unthinking, unfeeling quiescence; but that it is a state of conscious enjoyment, and of sensible and intelligent intercourse with Christ the Lord. Now what the exact condition of a soul immediately after death shall be, and from that time to the period of the resurrection, is a question involving many points on which the Scriptures do not enable us confidently to speak. Probably the subject is one which, so long as we are in the body, we should be unable to enter into. In truth, my Brethren, what is the existence of a soul, separate and apart from the body, who of us can at all comprehend? How the soul, set free from the flesh, subsists; how it feels; how it acts; how it receives communications made to itself; how it gives expression to its own thoughts, sensations, and emotions;—on all such points how ignorant we necessarily are, from absolute incapacity to reach them. But notwithstanding much that is unrevealed, and much that is incomprehensible, a few facts are plain. And, thank God, they are quite enough to enable the Christian man to depart in peace. And the expression of the text seems just to convey those facts; for there will then be *rest*, and that rest *in Jesus*.

We say, there will then be *rest*. Yes, Christian,

Brethren, and you especially who are now tossing on the waves of a troublesome world, bless God for this certainty. Are you often distracted and oppressed in mind by reason of the weakness and suffering of the body? Yet it shall not be so by and bye. The mind shall not always be thus liable to disturbance, nor the thoughts be clogged, nor your exercises of prayer and praise be interrupted, nor sacred contemplation be impeded, as is now too often the case, from the infirmities and pains of the material part acting on and hindering the immaterial in its holiest occupations. Or are you vexed and perilled by the temptations of the world and its vanities; or tried by the children of the world, and their unbelief and enmity toward pure and undefiled religion? Or are you disturbed by the corruptions of your own nature,—corruptions which remain, yea, in them that are born again, and by which they are sore let and hindered in running the race which is set before them? Or are you disquieted by the malice and power of the spirits of darkness, ever ready, as they are, whether by secret suggestion, or by violent assault, to betray you, or compel you, into sin? Are these your troubles? More or less they must be so with all who are Christ's indeed. Yet here



again be it your consolation to reflect that these distresses shall not always be. A little season and you shall rest from these conflicts. The night cometh when the warfare must cease ; and your souls, translated from these scenes of evil and of strife, shall be far out of the reach of every snare, and every assault of the enemy : you shall “ enter into peace.”

And that peace “ *in Jesus*.” It is in His very presence you shall dwell. In your unfettered spirits you shall realise what it is to be with the Lord ; safe, quiet, and holy, under the shadow of His wings. How your intercourse and communion with Him shall be had, we may not now be able to explain. But that so it shall be, God has promised : and we know therefore in whom we believe, and how sure is the hope, that soon as the toil and struggle of this present state are past, you shall see Him “ whom having not seen you love, in whom though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

See, then, Christian Brethren, what death has been to all who have died in the Lord before you, and will be soon to you. You who know that Jesus is the Redeemer in whom you trust, and the Master whom you serve, be

cheered by the truth before you ; that death is to place you, in body and soul, under His special protection : your flesh resting from all labour and sorrow, till He shall wake it up from corruption in the day of His appearing : your souls reposing from all grief and all evil in the enjoyment of His presence, “ full of joy in the light of His countenance.”

Thus then accustom yourselves to look onward to a dying hour. That hour may be preceded by long sickness of body, and oppression of mind ; by much to harass and to disturb you ; much to make you feel, even to the last breath you draw, that your sojourn here is in a world of sin. But—one moment, and O what a change ! The flesh shaken off with all its weaknesses and woes. The spirit at liberty, soaring in gladness unutterable into regions of light and purity, there to dwell with Christ, and never, no never, to be separated from Him.

Accustom yourselves, we say, thus to meditate on dying. Take occasions for so doing. When you are in silence and alone, try to bring yourselves in thought to the solemn event. Anticipate the actual fact. Imagine yourselves on the eve of departure. Think what it will be to feel that yet a few seconds,

and you will be with Christ. It is a happy and a profitable exercise. The more you thus familiarise your minds with death, by a scriptural contemplation of it, the more will you be able when it is at hand, to rejoice in the prospect—the prospect of sleeping in Jesus.

II. But we have to pass on to other, and still greater things. Our subject bids us speak of the glory that is yet to follow. And our text leads us onward to a time when those that are fallen asleep in Christ, are to come with Christ: to come with Him in the great and blessed day of His appearing. “Them that sleep in Jesus *will God bring with Him.*”

Greater things, we say, are here, because, however sweet the rest, and vast the joy, to which death carries the believer, there is much yet in store which will not be displayed until God shall have accomplished the number of His elect. Then, and not till then, will the end come. Nevertheless the day is fixed. God hath appointed it; and so soon as it arrives, the whole developement of the purposes of His love toward His children shall take place. The Kingdom shall then be thrown open to them which has been prepared for them from the beginning of the world. And their “full consummation of bliss both in body and soul,” &c

which our Church speaks in her Burial office, shall be accomplished.

In the passage, however, to which our text belongs, the Holy Spirit, by St. Paul, has given us a very definite prediction of what shall then transpire. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then"—*i. e.* so soon as they are risen, the saints that are alive at the time, "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now here we have a distinct description of the final glory of the Church. Let us note what we are to expect.

1. In the first place, *the resurrection of the flesh*:—that most marvellous undertaking of the mighty power of God. Reason soon staggers when she begins to inquire, how it shall be? It is faith only that can grasp the assurance: faith built on the testimony of that Revelation which, by incontrovertible evidence, we know to be from God. There we read the repeated promises of Him, whose power and truth alike are infinite, and for the fulfilment of whose word we have his own Deity pledged,

promises which represent the resurrection of the flesh as one of the very first transactions in the day of Christ. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." So the Word of God has predicted: and so therefore the believer expects. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

And that flesh so raised shall be glorified also. Freed from all infirmity, and fitted for the presence of God, it shall be clothed in health, and beauty, and perfection, yea shall be caused to shine in heavenly lustre like to the very person of Christ the Lord. "He shall change," saith St. Paul, "our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." The mount of transfiguration witnessed what that glorious appearance of the Lord shall be: for then, we are distinctly taught, the Son of Man was seen as He shall be seen when coming in His kingdom. In likeness then to Him shall be the honour put upon the persons of His saints. "We know," saith St. John, "that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." And, again, St. Paul, "When Christ who is



our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

Surely, Christian Brethren, this is a truth not to be overlooked. If God purposes it, let not His people lose sight of it. God hath destined their very flesh to be glorified. How then should they look on their earthly house of this tabernacle? Does the Lord design for it such distinction? Shall not they then learn to regard their bodies as objects of Divine attention? Shall they not keep those bodies as the property of God; a possession redeemed by Christ, and destined unto glory.

And when pain and disease are allowed to seize those bodies now, yea and to bring them down to the dust of death, how shall the believer yet take comfort in the thought that in spite of all the ravaging of sickness, and the corruption of the grave, there is yet to come the redemption of the body, and say with the Apostle, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Yes, "*In us.*" For this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal immortality: and the glory of the Lord shall encompass the persons of His saints, when they shall come with Him, "according to the mighty

working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."


2. But if such things are for the *body*, what shall be the portion of the *soul*?—that soul which has been with Christ in Paradise? When the Lord Himself shall be revealed, then, saith the text, "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him:" their spirits, that have been reposing in the light of His love, shall attend and accompany Him on His return, and being joined again to the now recovered and glorified bodies, will thus be prepared for the joys and duties of their eternal state.

And if those bodies are to be fashioned like to Christ, shall the soul bear no resemblance to Him? Nay, is not this the declared will and design of God, that His people shall be "created in righteousness and true holiness," so as to bear the very image of their Lord? And O what a glory will this be! When you, Believer, and all the children of God with you, shall find in yourselves, and shall see in one another, "nothing that defileth;" but full of all pure and holy affections, dispositions, occupations, shall be constituted fit companions and associates for the angels of God; yea, shall be caused to reflect the blessed perfection of their

Lord and yours; then will there not indeed be seen in you “the beauty of holiness?”

O look forward then to the portion of your heritage. “Heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ:” this is the high station to which you are called. Often meditate therefore on what is the character of your inheritance: how holy, how exalted! “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Look less and less at the things which are seen, but fix your eyes and your hearts on the things which are not seen—not seen as yet, but most sure to be revealed in the day of Christ. And pray that you may be enabled more and more to “walk worthy of God who hath called you to His kingdom and glory.”

Christian Brethren, the subject before you this evening is indeed one much more fitted for meditation than description. The sweetness of sleeping in Jesus, the blessedness of coming with Him in His glory, these, which are the certain issues of the life of grace which God hath called you now to live, O be they more often the topics of calm, serious, scriptural contemplation. Take the Word of God, and gather thence for yourselves distinct and fixed views of all that is before you, that when you are



tempted with present evil, or tried with present affliction, you may endure as seeing that which is invisible; may live on earth, amidst its sins and its sorrows, sanctified and comforted by the thought of the holy rest which is so soon to receive you, and the glorious prospect of those rejoicings which you are to share at the coming of the Lord. O seek to live by these precious hopes. Seek to feel that they are realities. Pray God to keep you looking upward, looking onward.

And when at length the time ordained in His mercy shall arrive, that you are to die, there shall be no need of glooms or of terrors for you. Familiar with the event, by frequent previous contemplation of it, you shall welcome its approach. You shall lay you down in peace, and take the rest which the loving-kindness of your God then bids you enjoy, happy, O how happy in the assurance, that so soon as you are delivered from the burden of the flesh, your spirits shall be safe and blest with Christ your Saviour; your bodies meanwhile not forgotten; and that ere long, when He shall come in glory, you shall come with Him, to receive your bodies again, and to be made like unto Him, and to dwell with Him in His eternal kingdom; there to join with all His

saints, and with all dear friends in Christ whom you have loved below, in the praise and the service of God,—your God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for evermore. Yes, this is the end of the life of grace: to depart confessing, “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” O bless your God, ye who have this hope, for the mercy which has granted you such privileges now, has provided for you such comforts when you die, and has opened before you such exalted destinies hereafter.

We trust, dear Brethren, that we speak to not a few whose hearts do rise within them, moved with gratitude and love, at the thought of all the goodness of their God toward them. And such, we are sure, will not deem it an unsuited or an unwelcome close, as well of the whole course of subjects which has been brought before them at this season, as of the particular topics of our discourse to-night, if we now ask at their hands a contribution in aid of the National and Infant Schools existing in connection with this Church.

We say that such a request is not unsuited to the termination of these Lectures, because, Brethren, if there be any truth in the things

which you have heard concerning the history of man's salvation ; the bringing of a soul from its natural indifference, by conviction and by conversion, to the ways of godliness, and the conduct of that soul, amidst its difficulties and discouragements, by means of the aids and enjoyments which Divine mercy has provided, until the end of the religious life is gained in death and glory :—if, we say, such things are important, if they are true, then whatever stands in connection with them, will become in our esteem matters of deep and solemn interest.

But surely no reasoning will be required to shew how close is the connection between a religious character, and a religious education. If we desire to see those around us brought to live the Christian's life, and to die the Christian's death, then must we use the means to that end. And among those means the first and chief most assuredly is this, the communication of Divine truth. We must teach that truth if we would see the souls of our fellow-men sanctified and saved. The Word of God is His own chosen instrument for conviction, for conversion, for instruction, for consolation, for all the process whereby an immortal soul is to be prepared for a peaceful death, and for a glorious eternity. And not any believing man here present will

need to have a point like this argued with him.

No, Christian Brethren, we persuade ourselves that it will be quite enough to have directed your own thoughts to the blessed hopes which God has vouchsafed you in Christ your Saviour, hopes which enable you to look at death in peace, and at eternity with joy. And surely, as you prize those hopes for yourselves, and rejoice in the comforts so imparted to your own hearts, you will at once be led to think of others, and to feel an anxious care that they may share your mercies with you.

We ask you, then, to manifest this care by the aid which you render to-night to the schools for which we plead. Their main design, as you know, is this, to guide the young who are instructed in them, to the knowledge of those things which accompany salvation. We cannot look on such institutions, conducted as these are, and devoted to the inculcation of the pure truth of the Divine Word, without feeling an assurance that they are certainly to be the means of training many, not only for the life of this world, but of that also which is to come. We know Who hath said that His Word "shall not return void." We are sure that that Word will here be taught. And we therefore cherish

the confidence, that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit on that Word, many are here to be meetened for a religious life, for a happy death, and for a glorious resurrection.

In that confidence then, we earnestly commend these Schools, beloved Brethren, to your charity. And let us join, one and all, in the prayer, that those who are here taught, may, together with us, and with all whom we love, so “live the life we now live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God,” that when we die it may be ours to sleep in Jesus, and that when He comes in His kingdom, we may be brought with Him, and enter together into the joy of our Lord.

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FINIS.

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